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CHRIST'S RETURN

The Key to Prophecy and Providence

BY

ST. CLEMENT

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me....to proclaim the day of vengeance of our God." (Isa. lxi. 1, 2.)

"This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Luke iv. 21.)

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By A. B. Simpson

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Inscribed to the memory of

DWIGHT L. MOODY,

under whose preaching I
caught my first glimpse of
the outline of

GOD'S PLAN

for the restitution of all things.

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PREFACE

HILE riding on a railroad train in a Western State, recently, a Roman Catholic bishop told me of the great progress now being made by his church in this country. During the course of the conversation I said to him, "What will be the end of the church?" With an upward movement of his hands he replied, "Oh, it will be folded up."

I made the same inquiry of a Protestant bishop. He told me that he had been so busy performing the duties of his office that he never had taken the time to study that question. I asked another. He said that, "When the church gets the world converted, there will be a new heavens and a new earth; these will constitute heaven; and heaven will be the future home of the church."

I have interrogated, not only the princes of the church, but many of its ministry, and very many of the rank and file of its membership. In nearly every instance the replies have indicated ignorance that a definite plan was projected in the Bible, indifference as to what

the plan might be, or speculative vagary that precluded intelligent co-operation with God in bringing about the redemption of man and the restitution of all things.

Now the Word of God sets forth, in a very concise manner, a succinct, divine plan, by which the Creator and Ruler of the universe proposes to bring this prodigal planet, its inhabitants, and all it contains, back into harmony with Himself. It is to the study of this plan and its workings among men, that these pages are dedicated.

With the prayer that the little volume may find its way into the hands of a multitude of people who "are working for God," without definite knowledge as to God's purposes, or an exact end in view towards which to direct their efforts, and that the facts educed may be diligently compared with the Holy Scriptures, this work is sent forth by the author on its mission of love and helpfulness.

St. Clement.

On the cars, June 21, 1906.

CHRIST'S RETURN, THE KEY TO PROPHECY AND PROVIDENCE

By St. Clement.

I.

OMINATED by sin this world is under sentence of death. For "the wages of sin is death." All the days of man are passed in the shadow of his doom. Its grip, fixed on his fragile flesh in the womb, tightens to the day of dissolution. With every sigh, and ache, and falling tear, it obtains a stronger hold. Fellow-victims, without number, constantly fall by his side. Fat harvests are reaped every passing day. The scenes of death are the most familiar and dreaded facts of life.

The fruits of man's industry perish with him. The government he institutes, the society he organizes, the city he builds, the business he fosters and the home he constructs all pass away. The archeologist of to-day is busy opening the graves of yesterday. Another will analyse our dust to-morrow.

Nor is man alone the quarry. He is but one of the universal victims. The seal and clutch of death are fixed upon the life of all nature about him. The shivering earth, the rent mountain, the decaying forest, the decline of brute strength, the flutter of the falling sparrow, the withered rose and the sear and yellow leaf are the daily pledges of our own inevitable end. The furnaces of death are hot with life.

Struggle is without avail. Centuries and millenniums of fruitless resistance have demonstrated the supremacy of death. Genius, wisdom, knowledge, experience, strength, pleasure, work, love, money, are all but water poured forth upon the sand in the contest of humanity with death. The hapless race is adrift upon the tide that sweeps ever out toward the bar.

But, while man is born under penalty of death, he has not willingly yielded himself to the hand of the executioner. The instinct of immortality has inspired the hope in his innermost being that while death might interrupt, it would not extinguish life.

Co-existent with human life has been its longing for perpetuity. The philosophies of the ages are replete with beautiful speculation

and analogical argument that death cannot be cessation of existence. All peoples have joined in this world-wide and age-enduring enquiry. Job, Plato, and De Soto, alike, sought the fountain of perennial youth. But it was not to be discovered in nature by the searching of man.

Human reasoning has been, indeed, profound and well grounded. If, argued the philosophers, in the death of the flower, a germ is excepted from corruption from which another flower grows in the grave-mould of its predecessor; and if the Creator has made adequate provision for the fulfilment and gratification of the instincts of animals and birds, fishes, reptiles and insects, why should He deny the strongest instinct in the breast of man, the creature "fearfully and wonderfully made," and who bears the divine image?

Thus, the vision of man's longing spirit has fancied it discerned, in the kaleidoscope of nature, the dim light of immortality beyond the grave. But death, inexorable, blinded the eye of reason before it grasped the fact; the grave was filled in over the body of the sanguine dreamer; the night closed down and blotted out brief hope and the vision ever eluded the most eager pursuit.

Divine operations, throughout the universe, are absolute. When the human vision is projected through the telescope and the perfect method of the Creator is discerned in the march of the heavenly host; or when we contemplate the unfailing succession of the seasons day and night, seed-time and harvest; or when, through the eye of the miscroscope, the adjustment of order is seen in the *infinitesimal* world, or when, beholding the fecundity and variety of the life which surrounds us, we find it controlled in production and existence by exact requirement, we must conclude that divine procedure, in the natural world, in both creation and government, is according to definite plan and established law.

When we look from nature to man, the masterpiece of the divine workmanship; and find him to be, with the environment in which he is set, the only creature out of harmony with the divine purpose of orderly perfection; and that his defection is caused by a superhuman power of evil, exercised over him to accomplish his ruin; and that, helpless in the toils of sin, he is doomed to death; we would, analogically, naturally presume that the Creator would be concerned to adjust a dis-

turbance in His universe, so wide-reaching in its influence and disastrous in its results.

But we may search nature in every phase of her varied existence without finding a trace of any special divine interest or love for this sin-enslaved race. Nature is the text-book of divine greatness, glory and law. In it we see wisdom, omnipotence and precision written everywhere. The emphatic message nature has to speak to man is that of inexorable, uncompromising law. If he fails to obey it he is broken without delay, pity or remorse.

Revelation discovers to us that God is concerned about the rescue of man and uncovers for us the heart of God, just as nature makes known His power and wisdom. God's Son became incarnate, the Bible was given, and the Holy Ghost poured forth, that fallen, helpless man might understand that God held him in such high regard that He was ready to employ the resources of divine love and omnipotence to effect his rescue.

When revelation was given it was found that the work of God in saving man, like His work in nature, was to be conducted according to plan. Man was ennobled by being made a laborer together with God in its execution.

Even the details of the specifications of this plan were divulged that mistakes or misdirected effort might not occur.

It was not until after forty long centuries of brain and heart groping that God sent the Truth into the world and the fact and way of eternal life were made known. Jesus Christ stood by the opened sepulchre of the dead and corrupted Lazarus, and calmly announced, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." And then, to demonstrate that He was master of death as well as creator of life, He set the seal of His authority upon the great declaration by leaning forward into the black mouth of the rock-hewn tomb, and commanding, "Lazarus, come forth!" The result electrified the world. The grip of death was loosed, his poison fangs extracted, and the dead, emerging from the darkness, was relieved from the cerements of burial and restored to the love of his astonished family and friends.

The subsequent coming forth of the Conquorer from the sealed and guarded sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, was the final and sufficient proof of His authority and power over death. Upon this foundation His followers

have built their faith for nearly two thousand years. Death, the supreme power and end of sin, was rendered powerless by the sinless One. It could not hold the Saviour of men, nor can it retain such as find their refuge in Him. The decree has gone forth, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

And so, eternal life is, and the Christ is the door, and the only door, thereto. The universal instinct of the race for immortality may find its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, Son of Man! Son of God! Whoever, by faith in the Victor, will obediently follow his innate impulse for immortality, in the way which the Creator has provided, though he may not understand how, will, as do the other creatures of God's hand, without knowledge, act upon the instincts which lead to their satisfaction, be guided by the eye of the unerring Infinite into eternal life, which is the gift of God. "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

II.

EFORE Jesus came to begin the actual work of fulfiling the plan, in order that the futility of human effort to save the race might be demonstrated and the necessity for divine interference thoroughly understood, God tried the race, under varying circumstances, for four thousand years. Left to himself, man failed under conditions of innocence, conscience, authority, promise and law. As a race, he will also fail under grace. Indeed, his incompetency is already manifest.

Nevertheless, under grace, God is gathering out a people, through whom the restoration of man, and all things, will be accomplished. The second Adam will lead to the triumph. Associated with Him will be, not only the church, but God's ancient people, Israel; they, previously, having accepted Him as their King; for the calling of God is without repentance. Jesus will return to the earth, personally direct the final movement, employing the Jews in the work of evangelizing among men. The church will be elevated to the heavenlies, occupy the zone of the ejected prince of the power of

the air, and be associated with Christ in the oversight and direction of His perfect government.

This plan is not an innovation. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." "The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world," and the church "was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world." God understood it perfectly when He elected the Hebrews in the person of Abraham, when He gave them the law, and when He instituted the tabernacle worship and sacrifice. From the beginning, every divine revelation and act pointed to the ultimate glorious consummation of the restitution of all things.

The Jews, though living in disobedience and formality, remained the chosen people of God when Jesus arrived upon the earth. Under the law, they advocated reformation. Jesus was a Jew. He appeared with the Gospel of regeneration. "He came to His own and His own received Him not." God declared this would occur, centuries before it happened. But somebody was to receive Him, for the same Scripture continues, "but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God;" Who? "Even to as many

as believe on His name;" How? "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." In this Scripture God abandoned all connection with efforts which men had been making to reform the world. He then began the spiritual generation of a family of His own, to be known as "sons of God,"—the real church—through which, in conjunction with converted and restored Israel, by His fully empowered Son, redemption is to be wrought out.

Until the calling out of the incipient church on the day of Pentecost, the Word of God divided the world into but two classes—the Jew and the Gentile. All who were not Jews were Gentiles. For seven years subsequent to the sacrifice of Jesus, which was the initial step toward victory, the Gospel of regeneration, or, spiritual generation, was preached exclusively to Jews. The Jew was the first in the divine election and favor, and God gave him the fullest opportunity to so remain. A few accepted, but, as a whole, as a nation, they finally rejected, not Jesus alone, but His Gospel plan. After their position had been fully demonstrated by themselves, by entering upon a campaign of persecution directed against the church, came the wonderful vision

of Peter on the housetop of the tanner at Joppa. The Jews were then temporarily rejected, and God turned to the Gentiles with the proffer of His grace. From them a people was to be taken, by regeneration, through whom the divine plan could be executed.

Nothing has ever been set before the church of such exceeding significance as the apprehension of this divine plan for the redemption of the race. The knowledge of its scope and details, and conformity thereto, are of absolute importance if we would work with God and secure success. God's plan only can succeed. Its execution in detail, is as essential as is obedience to the laws of nature, for God is maker of both. The pattern has been given from heaven by the Holy Ghost, and it must be followed in every particular, even as Moses was commanded to follow the pattern for the tabernacle handed down from the mount. If, in ignorance, or indifference to God's purpose and plan our efforts are made along other lines, we may be saved as by fire, but we will have no part in the kingdom or the glory of the recompense of eternal reward.

What, then, exactly, is this plan? It may be found set forth very clearly in the Acts of the Apostles. The first council of the church

was in session at Jerusalem, about A. D. 52. They had been preaching the gospel for nearly twenty years. The matter of requiring circumcision of Gentile Christians was under consideration. The Apostle James was chairman of the meeting. Peter had made a speech setting forth how God had sent the Gospel to the Gentiles, first by His own mouth, how its preaching had been sealed by the witness of the Holy Ghost, "making no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." He urged that the yoke of circumcision be not placed on their necks. Both Barnabas and Paul followed him with speeches showing the wonders God had wrought by them among the Gentiles. When the facts were all recited, James said:

"Simeon (Peter) hath declared how God at first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 'After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build upon the ruins thereof and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called,' saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." (Acts xv. 14-17).

The writer is deeply and painfully sensible that this Scripture is, by some, interpreted figuratively, as one continuous event evolved through the church; that the gathering out of the church, and the rebuilding of the Davidic tabernacle, are held to be identical; otherwise, that the restoration of the Jewish ruin is counted a metaphor referring to the church, now being separated from the world. The logical conclusion of this exegesis is, that the preaching of the Gospel, during the present dispensation of grace, will eventuate in the salvation of the world, since "the residue of men," and "all the Gentiles," will be converted. We shall demonstrate that this position is superficial and untenable:

I. The passage used by the Apostle James is from the Prophet Amos. "After this I will return," is not in the prophetic utterance. The paragraph containing it, begins, "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David," etc., (Amos ix. 11). The words, "after this I will return," are supplied by the Holy Spirit—by Whom all Scripture is inspired—through the mouth of James, to show that the "that day" of Amos refers to the time of the return of the Lord to the earth.

This use of the prophetic Scripture does not make the truth less vigorous, since the apos-

tle does not pretend to make an exact quotation. There are frequent variations in the words used. The sense is the same. He is applying a prophecy, made over eight hundred years before, to a present beginning of fulfilment. The supplied and different words are essential to the application. He says: "to this agree (Gr. *symphonize*) the words of the prophets," etc. The idea is, that there is a prophecy related to the Gentile question under the consideration of the council, and that the fulfilment of this prophecy does, and will, perfectly symphonize and agree with the prediction. There can be no discords nor variations though the ages have intervened.

Now, the "I will return," is declared to occur, "after this." After what? After the visitation to "the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name,"—a dispensation now in progress and still incomplete. The Lord has not yet returned. His return, yet in the future, separates the Gentile visitation from the Jewish restoration. Hence, the finding of James, instead of referring to one great act, consummated through one body of people—the conversion of the world by the church—names, in detail *four* different and succeeding events:

1. The Gentile out-gathering—the church; "after this,"

2. The return of the Lord.

3. The Jewish restoration, accomplished by Himself; "that" (in order that)

4. "The residue of men," "all the Gentiles," "might seek after the Lord."

II. A further study of this prophecy reveals the fact that it refers, beyond the possibility of doubt, to the literal, final, and permanent restoration of Israel to their literal land. The paragraph concludes: "I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God."

This effectively disposes of the figurative use of the passage describing the Jewish restoration, as a metaphor for the church. Not only must the church be completed, but the return of the Lord, and the planting of Israel in Palestine, must occur before the residue of men and all the Gentiles seek after the Lord. Hence, it cannot be, that the church upon the earth, during the present dispensation, will be the agency used by God to convert the world. "Salvation is of the Jews."

III.

EFORE we examine the different parts of the plan through which God will effect the restoration, it will be necessary for us to look at the origin of evil and the power by which it is exercised in the world. Deliverance can be accomplished only when these forces are dispossessed.

The kingdom of Satan is the bane of the world and the anomaly of the universe. Spiritual, and the embodiment of all evil, it is hidden from the observation and study of the natural senses and faculties of man. Its existence and operations could not be suspected by any aptitude of the human intellect. The noxious suggestions which appear to man as spontaneous to his nature spring from the alien soil of depravity placed in his heart by the great enemy. Sin, sorrow, suffering and sickness were not constituent elements in the life which God breathed into dust.

But for revelation man would be ignorant, defenceless and helpless before the concealed and insidious warfare so relentlessly waged against his spiritual nature. That the numer-

ous danger signals of his Maker may be rendered ineffective Satan has succeeded in launching upon the world the spacious doctrine that evil is but an ethical principle—a prevalent influence—which can be overcome by the resistance of the will, and reformation.

The fact is, that, while Satan and his kingdom are spiritual and invisible, they are none the less real. Satan is a person, great and powerful. His throne, during ages, has been located in the atmosphere which surrounds the earth. From it, his edicts have been issued and his ministers sent forth to execute them. The inception of all spiritual wickedness is in these regions of which he is prince. Satan's person, kingdom and emissaries are as literal as the person, kingdom and angels of Jesus Christ.

The dominion of Satan is over the entire world. Jesus during his ministry, made repeated reference to him as "the prince of this world." He also spoke of "the kingdom of Satan," and of "Satan and his angels." Much of the time of the Master was absorbed in casting out demons by whom Satan had possessed and afflicted men. Paul called the great ruler "the god of this world," and "the prince of the power of the air," and warned the

church at Ephesus to put on the whole armor of God that they might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil:

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," (Eph. vi. 12).

The existence, malevolence, activity, seat and synagogue of Satan are clearly set forth in the Scriptures. Because Satan's wisdom and power are superior to anything human, all will power and individual, ecclesiastical and national reformative projects, undertaken in human wisdom and strength, have been unsuccessful. They never brought forth complete nor enduring results. God alone can master and overcome Satan.

The princely career of Satan is, probably, about to end. His time is short and his punishment sure. In impotent rage against the divine decree he now spends the last days of the age in churning the world into a fearful foment.

Absolute science and God and His works are indivisible. The geology of the earth bears true witness when it affirms this planet to be hoary with the long ages of existence which

preceded the creation of man. Nature, understood, cannot bear false witness any more than can revelation. They are both of God. One proceeds from his hand, the other from His heart. One speaks of His wisdom and power, the other of His compasssion and tender love for men, His greatest but sin-enthralled creatures.

The truth appears to be that, when earth took her place in the universal family of worlds, untold ages ago, she was perfect. God created her and nothing imperfect can emanate from Him. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." How could man, except he were inspired of Satan, ever have supposed a chaos could come from the hand of God? The first race of beings placed upon her bosom were, likewise, perfect, for they proceeded from the same beneficent Creator. Perfection, beauty and happiness characterized the new earth and its inhabitants.

The prince, and, under God, the spiritual ruler of this new world, was Lucifer, an angel of light, who, close to the throne of God, ministered unto Him. He was the "son of the morning." The created endowments, of this splendid, heavenly minister were supernal. God says of him:

"Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, until iniquity was found in thee." (Ezek. xxviii. 12-16).

But evil entered this great minister of light. Its cause has been recorded for us:

"Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High," (Isa. xiv. 13, 14).

"Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou has corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness," (Ezek. xxviii. 17).

That Satan was incarnate in the king of Tyre is not more surprising than a former appearance he made as a "talking serpent." He will again become incarnate in Antichrist. This revelation teaches that, because of the superior endowments which his Creator had lavished upon him, Lucifer became dissatisfied with the rulership of the start (this earth), the government of which he had been set to

administer, and, indeed, with the government of any star, or stars, and selfishly aspired in his heart to become like the Most High and rule all stars. Then, out of this ambition, followed rebellion against God in which he involved his own principality and other lesser princes of heaven.

The result of this uprising was disaster. He, and all associated with him, were cast out of heaven. Jesus said, "I saw Satan as lightning, fall from heaven." No longer could God designate him as Lucifer—the radiant one. His name, henceforth became Satan—the opponent and adversary.

Expelled from heaven, Satan, with his retinue of degraded angels, came to his own principality. Opposed to God, he instigated sin and fostered evil upon the earth. Death is always the one end of sin. The beautiful earth which God had set in space became a desolate ruin. Its pre-Adamic inhabitants, steeped in iniquity, were engulfed in the catastrophe. Their bodies were destroyed. Their deathless spirits, still the vassals of Satan, yet wander in the earth seeking habitations in which they may dwell, satisfied with swine if they can find none other. They are demons who torment.

In process of time the Creator whose purposes are immutable, entered upon the reconstruction of the desolated earth. This, He accomplished in six literal days, each bounded by its evening and morning. It was as fair as when it first left His hands. Upon it He placed the seed pair of a new race of beings. To the man, under condition of obedience, he gave dominion over the earth and the fulness thereof. It was His beneficent design that the man should, by the spiritual conquest of Satan, wrest from him his principality.

IV.

HE tragedy of Eden was a contest between the human and the superhuman, man and Satan. Five things should be borne in mind:

I. Satan is a spirit; consequently, while the prize of victory was the world, the struggle for supremacy had to be spiritual. It was the spirit of man pitted against that of Satan.

II. The test was the same as that in which Satan, as Lucifer, had originally failed —obedience to God.

III. Satan was a higher creation and greatly superior to man in spiritual wisdom and strength. Man, moreover, had the limitation of a body of flesh with its accompanying unspiritual, physical propensities.

IV. But God was on man's side and omnipotence was his ally as long as he continued obedient.

V. The test of obedience was necessary in order that man might, by it, demonstrate his fitness for dominion. If he proved disobedient to God he would not be more worthy than

Satan. His government could only continue in sin.

The battle was joined in Paradise. Satan attacked man through his mate. His weapons were subterfuge, sneers and lies. Man had but one point to guard. The adversary found the only weak spot in his armor. He pierced it. Man fell. His love for woman was greater than his love for his Maker.

Forty centuries of Satanic rule followed. The tree of sin filled the world. Its pestilential fruit poisoned the earth and every living creature. The curse was universal. Its blast almost succeeded in blotting out, even the remembrance of God, from the minds of men. The nations were weakened. The Jew was mammonized. Except in an infinitesimal remnant, faith and piety were extinguished. Man failed in his every effort to lift himself. Redemption is of God.

But the divine purpose respecting the expulsion of Satan, and man's rulership, remained unchanged. God sent the second Man. He was born of the woman through whom came the failure of the first man. Satan was watching for Him and the infant Jesus, yet in swaddling clothes, was met by the reeking blade of Herod; he followed Him to Egpyt and

back to Nazareth; he drove Him into the desert and fell upon Him while His body was weakened by hunger; he carried Him to the pinnacle of the temple and offered Him success and the applause of the people; he led Him to mountain heights, displayed the kingdoms, glory and wealth of his domain and offered to bestow them all for one act of this obedience.

Unsuccessful, the world prince changed his tactics. He entered the hearts of the Jewish rulers and turned them against Him; he filled them with malice and fury. They poisoned the minds of the people; they changed the meaning of the prophetic Scriptures; they hounded Him; they paid Judas to betray Him; they suborned false witnesses to perjury; they incited the mob to frenzy; they intimidated the Roman Governor; they demanded the life of their Victim; they spit upon, plucked the hair, stripped and scourged Him; and mocked with scarlet robe, reed sceptre, and crown of thorns the Man whom God had sent to deliver them from the bondage of Satan.

Then they laded Him with the cross; they drove Him with goads through the streets of Jerusalem, until He fainted; they dragged Him up the incline to the bald brow of Calvary and stretched Him on rugged cross-beams of

timber; the Roman nailed Him fast; they lifted Him above the earth to hang like a felon; they jeered His suffering; they wagged their heads and bellowed forth their spleen; and the only drink they proffered His thirst was vinegar. From the lullaby of braying donkeys and lowing cattle, which was the only reception earth gave Him upon His arrival, to the gleam of wicked eye and the blasphemous jibe of polluted lip, this master Man was obedient to God through life, even unto death. The spiritual battle with Satan was fought and won. An obedient Man had conquered a disobedient angel. The trial was that of a Spirit-filled man. Jesus had no other strength in His contest with Satan, than any of us may obtain. To the tomb of that Man heaven sent deliverers. Death cannot hold such as He. The last enemy has no power over Him nor such as belong to Him.

Then began, through the church and the preaching of the Gospel, the work of getting out an obedient people to sit with Christ in the kingdom which was to supersede that of Satan. It has occupied long centuries. In the interval Satan has continued to rule, though an usurper. This is necessary, for the spiritual rulers in Christ's kingdom must be spiritually tested

even as was He. They must learn obedience. Satan's kingdom and power furnished the only opposing force upon which the obedience of believers in Christ could be developed and tested. Hence, he and his have been permitted to remain, though conquered, until earth's new governors were gathered from among men.

The government of the kingdom of Satan is modelled after that of the kingdom of God. The divine is an absolute monarchy. As everything proceeded from the Creator, so are all things centered in the Ruler. He is the final power; His the court of last resort.

Closely associated with God are the cherubim, and archangels. But they are not a cabinet for counsel. They are but chief messengers. Lucifer was of cherubic rank. Michael, the prince of the people of Israel, is an archangel.

Underneath the archangels are the angels of God—a great host. Among other duties they have been assigned that of ministering unto the heirs of salvation. The Bible contains numerous beautiful incidents of God's tender love and constant watchfulness and care over His earthly servants through the medium of angel ministrants. The feeding of Elijah in the desert, the shutting of the mouths of the

lions for the protection of Daniel, and the deliverance of Peter from prison and the sword, are examples of this ministry. Before the outburst of modern spiritualism, angel ministration was a frequent subject of pulpit discourse. The translated saints will be associated with the angels in the government of the heavenly kingdom.

Since the temporary setting aside of the Jew from the divine favor he has lost the dignity of being the representative of God upon the earth. That honor was transferred to the church of Jesus Christ. The divinely appointed officers of the earth part of the kingdom of God are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

Satan's government as it exists in the heavenlies, consists, first, of himself as supreme head. Not being ubiquitous, omnipotent or omniscient, however, he can not dispense with counsellors. The angels associated with him in government are those who were involved with him in rebellion against God and were, with him, expelled from heaven.

Every earthly government is in charge of one of Satan's chief princes, who manages its politics and operative machinery in the interests of the kingdom of darkness. This is

clearly shown in the activity of his princes in Persia and Grecia, their interference with the angel of Gabriel who had been sent to answer the prayer of Daniel for the deliverance of his people from the Babylonish captivity, and to direct the mind of Cyrus to its accomplishment. The angelic contest lasted three weeks and finally the archangel Michael came to the assistance of Gabriel. Herein is seen the reason for the impossibility of purifying earthly politics. As long as Satan controls them they will be conducted in the interest of his kingdom.

Subject to these spiritual earth princes are the hordes of demons—disembodied evil spirits—who enter, influence and plague men. Most of the physical and mental maladies which afflict human beings, and, indeed, all creation, are consequent upon demoniac possession. They have no fear of earthly opposition. They can be cast out only in the name and through the spiritual power of Jesus Christ. All men who yield themselves to evil are the physical agents of Satan upon the earth.

In the purification of his people God often employs Satan and the forces at his command. The Corinthian Christian who fell into fleshliness was delivered unto Satan for the des-

truction of the flesh in order that his spirit might be saved. So also were Hymenæus and Alexander, that they might learn not to blaspheme.

Satan is restricted in his dealings with the servants of God. There is a hedge of divine protection about them which he cannot pass. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." The heavenly Father removes the hedge, at times, in order that His people may receive ncessary testing and discipline. This was true in the case of Job. The adversary cannot afflict the servants of God, however, unless they, by disobedience, admit him to their hearts, or God sees that such trial is necessary to refine their spiritual natures.

V.

HE first section of the plan of God, named by James, for the restoration, is, as we have seen, the visitation to "the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name." Begun nearly nineteen hundred years ago, this out-gathering is still in progress.

To the twelve, Christ said, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God." The church, the manner of its selection from the Gentiles by the Spirit, through the death of the Son of God, and its destiny of heavenly rulership, were seen, but not understood, by the old Hebrew prophets. They did not know that the Jewish branches were to be broken off and the Gentile church grafted in. They inquired, and searched diligently, and saw, in a dim way, the existence and operations of a body of people, not Jewish; but they could not grasp the meaning. The knowledge of it was also withehld from the angels, who desired to look into it. Paul received it by revelation and was given the commission "to make all men see what is the

fellowship of the mystery," which he declares to be "Christ and the church." He held it in a pure conscience, suffered bonds on account of it and requested the prayers of the churches that he might find open doors and preach it with boldness. It yet remains a mystery unto multitudes of people who will not know the Truth, preferring, rather, to see only their own projects of pride and worldly power.

The ancient Greeks had a custom of calling out certain persons, having the full rights of citizenship, from among their countrymen, to conduct public, municipal affairs. The duty of those thus called was, practically, the administration of city government. This government was called the *ekklesia,* or assembly. The word is compounded of two other Greek words, and means *a calling out* for government. It is the word translated *church* in the New Testament. Literally, the church is a body of people separated from the world unto Jesus Christ for government. This government is to be with Christ, during the thousand years of His reign upon the earth, in what is known as the kingdom of the heavenlies, (or heaven) in distinction from the kingdom of God, which designates the eternal and universal divine empire.

The emoluments of Christ's kingdom are offered as rewards for obedient and faithful service to such as have, through faith in Jesus Christ, received the gift of eternal life. They will consist of authority and power, thrones, crowns and judgment seats.

The first we hear about the church of Jesus Christ occurs late in the ministry of our Lord, during His last missionary tour, after the Jewish rulers had turned against Him and shortly before His crucifixion. It is recorded in Matthew xvi. Peter had just made his great confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Referring to this declaration of His deity Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church." The Scripture makes the doctrine of the deity of Christ the foundation of the church. The first absolute essential, therefore, to membership in the church of Christ is the acceptance of the doctrine of His only begotten Sonship. No difference what else we may represent, if we do not stand on the doctrine of the deity of Christ we cannot build on Him.

What this foundation "rock" will mean to the church may be seen by referring to the peroration of the Sermon on the Mount. When the great tribulation hurls its elements

of destruction upon the world, only that will endure which rests upon the rock—the deity of the Saviour. He will exercise His love and omnipotence by preserving the church, from the fury of the storm.

It will also be observed that, when Christ first spoke of the church it did not exist. He says, "I *will build* My church." It was still in the future. This does away with the attempt to identify the church with Israel; for Israel and the Jews were very much in evidence while Jesus was in the world. The church is a very different institution, in calling, work and destiny, from the Hebrew election.

It should also be noticed that Christ, Himself, is to build the church. It is not a man-made institution. Even its own membership has no responsibility for construction. Empty and surrendered vessels through which He can work, is all the great Builder asks of men. No opposition can overcome the real church. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The call, by which the church is gathered, is made by the Holy Ghost, who was sent into the world on the day of Pentecost for this purpose. While many are called, but few respond. "Whosoever will"—including Jews—

"may come." The invitation is conveyed to the perceptions and consciences of men through the Word of God, spoken, printed and written. By this means sinners are convicted by the Holy Ghost of sin, righteousness and judgment. The unsaved may accept the call by turning away from sin and exercising faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their crucified and resurrected Saviour. Those who believe with their hearts, unto salvation, and are willing to confess the name of Jesus Christ before men, are cleansed of the guilt of all their past sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice they appropriate, by faith, as their own. They are thus "born of the Spirit," "from above," and become "sons of God" through this spiritual generation. Upon all such, eternal life is bestowed as the "gift of God." A spiritual and eternal career is thus opened before them. The power is reserved to them to make it what they will.

The plan of God contemplates that all who receive the gift of God shall be filled with the Spirit, who will live and develop the new life of Christ born in them. Thus they will go on to perfection, grow up into the image of Jesus Christ, become "like Him," and be fitted to meet ssociate and administer government

with Him when He returns to the earth with the kingdom He has gone to receive.

But many fail to do this. They, indeed, put their hand to the plow, but they looked back, and will be found unfit for the kingdom. They built playhouses of their own, of wood, hay and stubble, instead of working together with the Master in the construction, according to the plan, of the imperishable, spiritual edifice which He is building of gold, silver and precious stones. When their work is declared in that day, and the fire shall try it, instead of being found worthy of reward, their "work shall be burned" and they will lose it all; though they be "saved as by fire." They worked hard enough, but their labors were misdirected. When Christ comes, like the foolish virgins upon whom the door to the marriage was shut, they will have no oil (Holy Ghost) in their lamps (the Word of God into which they read their own plans and the wisdom of the world), and they will be excluded and have no part in His glorious reign.

Why? Because, being disobedient and unspiritual, they will possess no qualifications for spiritual rulership. Though born into the family of God they preferred to remain wilful children. Though saved, they lived car-

nally and selfishly unto the flesh and the world. They did not develop Christlikeness. They did not go on to the perfection required. When He comes, they will not be like Him. Hence, they cannot see Him. Rejected from the kingdom, with its rewards, they will probably continue in the place of the dead until the thousand years are fulfilled. The meeting of the Bridegroom and the bride occurs "in the air." Those upon whom the door is "shut" certainly will not be caught up to meet Him and they, probably, will not be resurrected at that time. But, because they believed on Jesus Christ, and received the gift of eternal life, saved as by fire, they will be brought forth in the second resurrection and be passed in judgment because they accepted Jesus Christ who was judged for them; for "the gifts of God are without repentance."

The reason so few accept the Gospel call of the Holy Ghost, and so many of those who accept it do not become "overcomers," may be seen in the regimen which Christ prescribed for His followers: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, daily, and follow me." The cross is the instrument of death. The every-day essentials for Christian discipleship are self-denial

and the crucifixion of the flesh and the world. Thus, only, may the spiritual be developed.

Born into the family of God, the regenerated have all the rights inherent therein. All things belong to obedient children and may be commanded, by faith, as required. Their human natures still exist, but the Spirit in them is strongest and makes them overcomers. Every victory increases their spiritual power of resistance against sin.

The activity of the church, in this world, is not assaciated with human schemes of greatness, honor and wealth. Its members are, rather, to expect and choose separation, persecution, humiliation and poverty. Their entire duty and privilege, respecting themselves, lies in perfecting Christlikeness of character. What we are, is of much greater importance to the Master than what we do. His disciples are to keep themselves pure, watch for, and be ready to meet Him when He returns to the earth. When that event occurs, *because they are like Him*, they will see Him.

The world is filled with devices for reform, culture, civilization and progress. There is no Scriptural authority for the church to engage in any of them. It is not of this world; neither is it under the law. Its citizenship and

politics are in heaven. Human efforts to make the world better are abortive and cannot succeed. The standard being Bible righetousness, the world will grow more corrupt until Christ returns to put away Satan and sin.

Aside from the development of Christlikeness in themselves, and doing good unto all men, especially such as are of the household of faith, the only employment set for the church, upon the earth, is the evangelization of the world with the Gospel of Christ, in order that the Spirit, by the Word, may have opportunity to complete the bride (church) of Christ. Only such as are filled with the Spirit are competent to do this work. This witness should be borne everywhere, at all times. The church is gathered from all nations, tribes, kindreds and tongues. Every nation and people on earth will have representation among the officials of the government of the kingdom.

VI.

THE present temporal relationship which the church sustains to Jesus is a subject that may well command our eager interest; since, upon it, depend eternal life and our future association and reward with Him. Not only are we directly taught to abide in Christ; that Christ is our only hope of glory; and that we are to look for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ; but, in several principal figures, the blessedness and intimacy of our union with Him is photographed, and hung up in the Bible galleries for our edification and comfort while we make the pilgrim journey.

The first of these pictures is known as the Vine and the branches. The Master, Himself prepared this masterpiece. In it He represents Himself as the Vine and His disciples as the branches. The branches, growing from, and dependent upon the vine, partake of the identical sap which is the life of the vine. Without any gap, but with perfect oneness, the branch lives and thrives because it is ac-

tually a part of the vine. Men look upon a vine, with its shooting branches; but they do not say, "See the vine and its branches;" they exclaim, "See that vine!" Our identity is in Christ.

The object of the union of the branch with the vine is, not only that the branch may partake of the life of the vine, but also that, from the branch, the fruit may be gathered for the profit, not of the branch, nor yet of the vine, but of the husbandman. Now the Father is the Husbandman, and Christ is the Vine. The branches represent the church. The Father is glorified when the branches bear much fruit. What sort of fruit does the Father seek to gather from the church during this Gospel age? His ultimate purpose is to restore all things unto Himself. What is the present relationship of the church to that end? *Obedience!* The fruit of obedience must be borne from the life of His Son, Who was obedient, even unto death. Jesus said to His disciples, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments;" also, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you;" and "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." Obedience is made, by Christ, the test of love. The life of Christ abiding in us is vital to our

existence, and the only fruit the church can produce, which can glorify the Father, and which the Father will accept, is conformation to His great plan of restoration.

The result of disobedience, or separation of the branch from the vine, is, that it *withers*. It does not cease to exist, but its existence is withered and useless. The most imbecile and wretched thing on earth is a sapless professor of the Christian religion. Even the world regards him as trash (vine trash is the most tangled and exasperating of any) and fit only for the fire.

Neither the life, nor the fruit, depend upon the disciple. His one responsibility is compassed by abiding in Christ. The Master determines both the direction of the life, and the manner and abundance of the fruit borne; but it may be observed that the low-hanging branches are not only the most abundant in fruit, but they are also the most accessible to the harvester. Humility is a superior grace.

Another striking figure, illustrating the relationship of the church to Christ, is that of the body, of which Christ is the Head. "Now are ye the body of Christ and members in particular." The union of the various members into His body is accomplished by the baptism

of the Holy Ghost. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

While the body is being gathered from among the Gentiles, Christ, its Head is in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father, waiting for His kingdom. At the beginning of the kingdom age He will return to the earth and be joined to His completed body. It is the function of the body to execute the will of the head. From the head proceed instructions as to the government of every member of the body. Since, through the system of nerves, every sensation of the body affects the head, it follows that the head is careful to protect and correctly order the disposal and employment of every member over which it is set. Therefore, the office of the head is to rule the body. Whenever the body, through its physical propensities, acts contrary to the judgment of the head, it suffers.

The Head of the church is exceedingly sensitive as to the movements of His body. The slightest disobedience will grieve the Spirit of Christ. His grief may be instantly detected by a heaviness in the heart of the body. If His directions concerning the ordering of our lives be not followed, both He and we suffer. Though His person is now separated from us,

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His knowledge of us, through His Spirit, is as perfect as it will be when we are actually joined to Him. Our one, simple duty is obedience. We may not talk back nor argue.

> "It is ours not to make reply;
> Ours not to reason why;
> Ours but to do, and die."

It is a matter of joyful comfort to the Christian to know that, even though he may fall into disobedience, "We have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ, the Righteous;" and, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us (keeps us clean) from all sin."

The most important use of the body is to make ourselves apparent to the world. The life within us is invisible. The real man is spirit. We could, and, ultimately, will exist without mortal bodies. A world of spiritual beings, of which our sensuous natures cannot take cognizance, both good and evil, exists all about us. But this earth, and its varied life, are clothed with the physical.

In order that, being now a part of this physical, we may be known, located and communicated with, our physical bodies are necessary. We are recognized among men according to the conditions and activities of our physical bodies.

The crucified Jesus, having ascended to the Father, and now being invisible to the senses, is made known to the world through His body, which is the church. Through it His Spirit works, the Word is preached and the plan developed. If the body is disobedient to the Head, not only does it suffer, but He feels the anguish of our pain, and the working out of His plan is hindered according to the extent of our disobedience. The Lord would have returned to the earth long ago, doubtless, had the church been faithful in the execution of its great commission. For it, she has substituted the wisdom of the world which is foolishness with God, bedecked herself with temporal and physical adornments, gone searching with the world after knowledge that "shall vanish away," expended her time and strength in movements for the impossible reformation of humanity, and permitted her high places to be used as altars upon

which the Bible has been sacrificed to intellectual pride. Thus does she conspicuously represent her Head to a lost world.

The identification of the church with the world, even in a partnership with its best works, is very prejudicial to the influence of its heavenly standing among men. The enterprises of the world are conducted not as unto Jesus Christ, nor for the glory of God, but wholly that objectionable conditions may be ameliorated and the world made better. The Bible teaches that human conditions of evil cannot be mitigated until Christ comes and puts away sin. It must continue to become more and more corrupt. It is ours to throw the life-line to those on the sinking ship. Only Christ can destroy the works of Satan. If we compromise our witnessing strength for Christ by lowering our efforts to the level of the world's struggle for impossible betterment, we wink at the blindness which fancies that reformative measures will result in Utopian bliss, administer a sedative to conviction for sin and injure the cause of our Lord by the practical admission that men may do what Christ only can accomplish. It is like as if Noah had allied himself to Babel, the delusion of Shinar, in building a tower designed to reach heaven.

But the most beautiful and satisfying, and the last of the illustrative figures of the Bible to be presented here, is that of the "bride." "Come hither and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife," was the invitation to John on Patmos, when the vision of the end of the age was unfolded before him. The church is to become the bride of Christ. The relationship now is that of betrothal. He came into this world and loved us so well that He died for the privilege of making the proposal of this relationship to us. As Abraham sent Eliezar into a distant country to find a Gentile bride for Isaac, so God sent the Holy Ghost into our world to select and prepare a bride for His dear Son.

If we have consented to the invitation conveyed from the Lord to us by the Holy Spirit, then, whatever may have been our relations with the world, and sin, before, we now are separated from them, and unto Him. His preferences and interests have become ours. We are true to Him. People with whom we could promiscuously keep company, and things we could legitimately do, before our betrothal, have become, not only bad form, but distasteful. Even the dearest ties of love and association, those that have bound us to

home and our blood kindred, are overshadowed by this greater affection, and we find ourselves stealing away to some closet tryst where we may secretly commune with Him—our heavenly Lover.

These are the days in which He is engaged in preparing "a place" for us. The Bridegroom, to be, is getting our new home ready—the mansions in the skies. It is a love match, but it will be a good marriage for us. We shall be lifted from plebeian rags and clothed with the purple of heaven's royalty. Elevated from the physical to the spiritual, and from earth to heaven, we shall find our husband—a King. He belongs to that eternal dynasty of universal rulers. He will be King of kings and Lord of lords. His court will be glorious beyond any human dream, and shining cherubim will minister before His throne.

And what of the church? She is to become His radiant queen. She shall sit with Him in His throne and wear His crown. His dignity and glory will be conferred upon her. His Father is our Father now, His court will be our court, and His power, our power.

While the Bridegroom tarries a little to make all this splendid preparation for us, it is His will that we, likewise, prepare our-

selves for our future career. He would have us remain faithful to our plighted troth; He desires that we become familiar with the etiquette of heaven's court, that we be not ashamed when He introduces us to the Father and all the holy angels; and He places before us the study of divine government, that, when we shall come to administer its principles we may understand its constitutional provisions. The Bridegroom will have a bride like Himself. She must be holy and without blemish, "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing." The first earthly essential of the new born soul for this destiny, is death to sin, self and the world. We cannot find spiritual resurrection in His likeness until we have first gone down into His death. He who first suffered crucifixion, rightly demands it of His bride.

What would be the sorrow of our Bridegroom, if, perchance, while preparing our future home, He should discover that His betrothed, she for whom He died, she whom He loves with an everlasting love, she for whom He longs with indescribable tenderness, had contracted a "friendship with the world which is enmity with God," and was living in adultery?

VII.

IT is probable that the word "church," in the New Testament, refers only to such, among those who have received the gift of eternal life, as prove to be "overcomers," and who, consequently, will have earned their reward and sit with Christ in the government of the kingdom. At His coming He "shall send His angels, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."

The deferred hope of Israel has become the glorious hope of the church; for, out of the rejection of Christ by "His own," came, not only the church, but its hope of participation in the kingdom, the realization of which it now eagerly awaits. The natural branches (the Jews), because of unbelief, were broken off from "the root and fatness of the olive tree," and branches from the wild olive tree (the Gentiles), grafted into the trunk of God's plan. These foreign branches have their existence and standing, only by faith

(Rom. xi. 20), and they are specifically warned that, in case they become high-minded, God will not spare them any more than He did the Jew. The casting away of the apostate church, therefore, is not hyperbole, but an awful fact. Something of what it will mean may be understood from the punishment which the Jews have undergone.

Prophecy represents Christ, not only as poor, and despised and rejected by His people; but also as a powerful and glorious Prince, with a Gentile consort, ruling the whole earth in an everlasting dominion. The vision of Jewish expectancy, when Christ came, was fixed wholly upon that aspect of prophecy which presented the world-wide kingdom. Proud, formal and unspiritual, the chosen people had become bigoted. Instead of seeing that they had simply been called out as an agent to be used in the plan of God for the restoration of all things back to their normal place under the beneficent, divine government, they believed their own elevation and supremacy to be the ultimate end of God's purpose. They lost sight of the fact that Satan and sin must be put away before the kingdom of universal righteousness can be established in the earth. When Christ first appeared, therefore,

as the sin-bearer, the Jew, looking only for the kingdom, and blind to everything that did not partake of the nature of kingdom glory, refused to accept Him as Messiah. But, unwittingly, the Jew helped Christ do His primary work as an offering for sin, by making of Him the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Being unable to use the chosen people for government in the kingdom, which would, doubtless, have been established at that time had they received Him, Christ made provision for the out-calling of the church, which was grafted into and became a perminent part of the plan. He then went away until the church could be gotten out from among the Gentile nations.

Nothing but omnipotence, reaching down and lifting it up into itself, can change the material into the spiritual, the human into the divine. The material from which the church is taken, like that from which the Jew was chosen, is earthly, human and sensuous. The natural ties and Satanic forces, which bind it to this world are only less strong than the power of God. It is scarcely strange, therefore, that the church as an ecclesiastical establishment, in the world, has had its attention

turned from God's plan, and, like the Jew, has come to regard itself as the instrument through which the world is to be converted. Only a humble and continuous abiding in Christ, enables, even the church, to see through His eyes. A well known ecclesiastical prince recently said, in a great congregation: "We don't want Christ to return until we have shown Him what *we* can do."

Nevertheless, as there was a remnant among the Jews which accepted Him when He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and through it He proceeded with His plan, so there will be found in the church "A little flock" like Himself, when He arrives the second time, "without sin unto salvation," through which He will accomplish all His good purposes.

The second coming of Christ to the earth will be as literal and personal as was His first visit. Every detail of the voluminous prophecies concerning Him, that has been fulfilled, thus far, has been literally accomplished. It certainly is not more wonderful that the Son of God should come the second time than that He *did* come the first time. Nor should it tax our faith more that He will come the second time in power and great glory than

that He *was* conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of a virgin, both of which phenomena the church accepts and teaches. Nor is it more inexplicable that His return should be accompanied by all His holy angels, and the church, previously called from their graves, transfigured and caught up to meet Him in the air, than *was* His own resurrection from the dead and subsequent ascension to the Father. Indeed, the tax on faith to accept the teaching of the coming of the Son of God to this earth, in power and great glory, with a pomp and retinue of angels befitting the court of the august Creator and Ruler of the Universe, is not nearly so great as the acceptance of the doctrine of the immaculate conception.

Looking upon the past undeviating fulfilment of prophecy by literal fact; with the reiterated and emphatic declarations of both the Master and His apostles to the effect that He would return; with the direct statement that the great event would occur at an unnamed time, when human life and institutions would resemble those which existed in the days of Noah and Sodom; and with the additional information that the return would be in order that He

might judge the world in righteousness and make restitution of all things, we fail to see the warrant which any faithful expositor of the Scriptures has to teach that all this mass of prophecy means something other than the literal and bodily reappearance among men of the Nobleman who "went into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return;" or, that the church will effect the conversion of the world before His arrival.

We shall, probably, discover, when we get our eyes finally focused on the fulfilment, that the fallacy of post-millennialism has been one of Satan's most brilliant strategems for the spiritual debilitation of the church. The fact that he did not need the bastard doctrine and that it did not appear until after the Protestant rejuvenation of the early faith, would seem to confirm this opinion. The devil hitched it, as a millstone, to the re-discovered doctrines of justification by faith, taught by Luther, and scriptural holiness promulgated by the Wesleys.

The cry, "My Lord delayeth His coming," has resulted in a drunken dementia which has resorted to maudlin, worldly compromise, wisdom and methods, in the effort to accomplish a work which the church was never set to

perform. How is it possible for the church tc fulfil the express and emphatic injunction of the Master, to be ready, watching and waiting for His return, after she has deliberately made up her mind that He will not return until after the millennium, which she proposes to bring about by the conversion of the world.

And what do we see? In her effort to become great in the world, forgetting that hatred and persecution were to be the attitude of the world toward her pilgrim existence, the ecclesiasticisms of the present day have embraced the idea that numbers, however obtained, and a great temporal and material establishment, will, by the power of culture, dignity, and wealth, influence the minds of men to join themselves to her communion. And they are thus attracted, to a limited extent, and those who join from these inducements become like her.

The Spirit of God has withdrawn His presence just in proportion as these things have been exalted. .Except in isolated instances, the unction from above is unfelt. Human organization and noise have been substituted. The signs that were to follow the preaching of the Gospel have been withdrawn. Following its own plan, Christendom is working

without God. Surely we have entered upon the Laodicean period. In the end she will say, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Not knowing that she is "wretched and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked," and being neither "cold nor hot," but "lukewarm," God will spue her out of His mouth. The sad thing about it all is that she does not know her condition. Her material success must result in her heavenly failure.

VIII.

OONER or later, the church will be completed. "After this I will return." Blessed hope! Here is inspiration for every possible trial and test which the Refiner finds necessary in order to complete our purification. When the disciples, in great sorrow, contemplated the announcement of the Master's departure, He, with tender compassion, addressed Himself to their comfort:

"Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself: that where I am, there ye may be also," (Jno. xiv. 1-3).

It was expedient for the disciples that the Master should leave them, else their eyes would continue to search only for the kingdom, the time for which had not yet arrived. The spiritual work of generating a church for the government of the kingdom, must inter-

vene. Born, baptized and guided by the Spirit, their commission was to go into all the world and disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. In the meantime they were to constantly anticipate His return, the time of which would be determined by the diligence with which they executed their commission; for the end would come when the Gospel of the kingdom had been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations. Herein is found the greatest incentive to missionary effort.

The affectionate solicitude of the Lord for the future happiness of His followers, was another reason for His departure: "I go to prepare a place for you." Though we remain upon the earth to suffer and witness for Him, we must remember that He has suffered for us, and is now busy getting a place ready for us. In the interval we are not to be left orphans. Another Paraclete, like Himself, in all the essentials of love, wisdom and power, has come to reside with, comfort and energize us during His absence. He will also separate us from the dross of earthiness and selfishness, and make us a fit bride when our Lord returns to claim us.

Just as surely as Jesus is preparing a place for us, He will return to receive us unto Himself. He will not send death, fiery chariots, nor even angels, to fetch us, but He, Himself, will come after us. It seems certain that those who fall asleep in Him, go to be with Him, in spirit, during the time their bodies lie in the grave. The declaration of Christ to the expiring thief, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise;" the exclamation of the dying Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and the two sayings of Paul, "absent from the body; present with the Lord;" and "having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better;" all indicate this. But that is a very different matter from His return to receive the saints *with their resurrected bodies,* at the time of the establishment of the kingdom. Then, He is to come after us.

When Jesus ascended from the brow of Olivet, while the disciples "looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come *in like manner* as ye have seen Him go into heaven," (Acts i, 10, 11).

Whoever quibbles over this passage of Scripture lacks reverence for the Word of God. It would be impossible to state a fact in plainer, or more succinct language. The statement was made by angels, to men who had just seen the Lord ascend, and who had remained with Him until He was taken from them. When the cloud had received Him out of their sight, while their eyes were strained in steadfast look, if, haply, they might yet catch another glimpse of that loved form, the white-appareled, heavenly visitors stood by them, appointed by Jesus for that very purpose, and made the declaration to establish their faith. In like manner shall His followers see Him again, when He comes back into our atmosphere to receive them unto Himself, forever.

Throughout their ministry, and in their letters to the churches, the apostles constantly presented this blessed doctrine as the only and blessed hope of the followers of Jesus. They were to "wait for His Son from heaven;" the converts they made would be "the glory and joy" of the apostles "in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ *at His coming;*" and they made prayer that the hearts of the converts might be stablished "unblam-

able in holiness before God, even our Father, *at the coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and Paul says, "I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless *unto the coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ." They were to continue to celebrate the Lord's Supper to "show the Lord's death *till He come.*" The New Testament has much more to say concerning this, and cognate themes, than on any other subject presented.

Nor are we left in doubt as to the details of the joining of the Head to the body. That the hearts of the bereft brethren at Thessalonica might be comforted, the great apostle wrote them:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord; That we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then

we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words," (I. Thes. iv. 13-18).

"The dead *in Christ* shall rise first." What comfort is here for us now, as we tenderly lay away the forms we have loved and cherished. They are not dead. For His followers, Christ vanquished death and extracted his sting. The death virus has been removed. Death strikes them, but his strength is gone He cannot hold them. They have but fallen asleep. Their spirits shall return to their sleeping dust, with Jesus, when He comes from the skies. They will awaken, and life will be resumed—and it will be eternal life; for the second death will have no power over those who come forth in the first resurrection. What wonder that Paul labored so earnestly for this reward, and prayed:

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; *If by any means* I might attain unto the out resurrection from among the dead" (*ek* is used here twice in the original, Phil. iii. 10, 11).

We may be of that number; but perhaps not. It is possible that some of us may live until that day. If so, then what? Why death will not even have a chance to strike us. With the loved ones *in Christ* resurrected, they, and we who are alive:

"Shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality," (I Cor. xv. 51-53).

But the transformation of the church at the beginning of the day of the Lord will not cease with the resurrection and the putting on of our spiritual and glorious bodies. While glad friends are rejoicing in recognition and reunion, we shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The marriage will probably be celebrated, the marriage feast eaten and the preferments of the kingdom distributed there. It will not be far away—in the atmosphere surrounding this earth over which we are to reign.

In Isaiah's prophecy we find this significant passage:

"And it shall come to pass in that day that

the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth," (xxiv. 21).

This visitation is to occur in the day of the Lord. The prediction evidently refers to the dethroning of unworthy earthly kings and the casting of Satan out of the heavenlies. Further details are given in the Revelation:

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him," (xii. 9).

We have seen that Satan is the "prince of the power of the air." In these high places, the rulers of the darkness of this world, with their principalities and powers, are directing the forces of spiritual wickedness. They are to be cast out. The places they now occupy will be the seat of the glorified and enthroned church during the kingdom age. The spiritual wickedness they now instigate will be superseded by the righteousness which the new spiritual rulers of the earth will foster among men.

"And so shall we ever be with the Lord." Rest will be found, at last, for the weary spirits who have struggled through the battle and

emerged, with flying banners, as overcomers. Nothing, through eternity, shall ever be able to separate the church from her heavenly Bridegroom. With high and noble spiritual employments, perfect and perennial satisfaction will be the state of the bride as she fulfils her destiny of deathless rulership with her Lord.

The "tribulation saints" will be that body of formal members of the church, who, being unprepared to meet Christ when He comes, and finding themselves left behind when those who are ready "are caught up to meet Him in the air," will see their unspiritual condition and hasten to repent. They will suffer martyrdom, during the great tribulation, on account of their faith, and their spirits will cry out to God for the redress of their persecutions.

IX.

OR a generation the world has been undergoing a transformation. It has proceeded with a constantly accelerating impetus. It is equally apparent whether reference be made to commerce, politics, society, or religion. Old methods of life have been abandoned and intense and more strenuous ones adopted. All processes of mental and physical activity employed during the ages spanned by human existence are counted slow and antiquated, and all who cling to them are left behind in the mad race for supremacy.

Coupled with this ever increasing strain upon human energy is an iconoclastic spirit which grows arrogant as modern life becomes more luxuriant. It aims at the obliteration of the old paths in which the fathers walked, and the displacement of the products of the past by innovations of the present. This is particularly true in the realms of commerce, education and religion. Whatever interferes with the development and progress of new ideas is relegated to oblivion. Hoary systems of

faith and practice have been swept away with ruthless hand, and, in their stead, appear more modern and beautiful creations held to be abreast of the times. *Success* is the new God worshipped by the multitudes.

The results of the co-operation of the new energy and the new iconoclasm are two-fold: The new energy demands the tireless attention and efforts of all who would attain success. leaving them without the inclination or time for the self examination and private devotions necessary for the salvation and development of the spiritual man; and the new iconoclasm despises the old things and is intolerant of all who continue to hold them.

The incitement to this new and arduous order of life appeared, in embryo, during the early decades of the last century. It was seen in the discovery and application of new forces and the invention of new appliances, all designed to lessen human labor and add comfort to human life. As men came to understand what these forces meant to them and how they could be applied to the creation of wealth, as well as to the comforts and luxuries of life, a mad scramble for money and power paralysed their finer sensibilities to the more important interests of God and heart culture.

Intellectual culture embellished by art and polite manners, was enthroned as the consort and queen of wealth.

To-day spiritual culture exists, but walks in the shadow of the intellectual. Beautiful and commodious churches for the worship of God have been erected by the tens of thousands. Their architecture, adornments and appointments could scarcely be surpassed. But they are temples for the intellect. The God who must be worshipped through faith, in spirit and truth, has few spiritual worshipers The desire to recognize God finds expression in other ways. Numerous educational institutions, of every description, and for all classes of people, flourish. Some of them are fabulously endowed. Eleemosynary asylums have been established for the care of dependents of all ages and conditions. Rationalism and materialism are in the ascendant. They seek to govern the three-fold nature of man, dominate every condition of life and interpret every presentation of God.

In order to obtain a good general view of the situation it will be well for us to look at the prevalent and dominant conditions of life as they have grown to their present proportions and now exist.

The mainspring of the commercial life of the world, as in all ages, is the amassing of wealth. The application of steam, electricity and other forces to the wheels of enlarging commerce, demanded large capital. This was produced by such as possessed it. The owners of capital associated themselves together for its use. The power of aggregated capital soon became manifest to its owners and greater accumulation was found to produce greater power. The merging of many industrial plants under one head was found to be economy. Centralization was continued until mergers were merged again. This has continued until a few men, comparatively, each at the head of a vast department of commerce, or industry, control not only the commerce and industries of the world, but the world itself. This is accomplished by the manipulation of production and prices.

The products of manufacture and the comforts and luxuries of life are more abundant, and the cost of living more expensive than during any period of the world's history. Competition has been eliminated and the spirit of independent manhood crushed. The distribution of the commodities of life among consumers is effected according to the same

general plan. The entire earth is under manipulation. Commerce is king, and the credentials of those who buy and sell must bear the seal of the king.

The decrees of trade are absolute. They cannot be resisted. Wealth rules and whoever stands in the way is broken. The small are swallowed up by the great. If argument fails, the screws begin to turn. A ruined business, a desolate home and hungry, weeping wives and children bring the most obstinate to terms. The years have been filled with the most determined resistance an the part of the people. Genius for organization and leadership is bought up. Of other genius there is no fear. Unions, granges and political federations have sprung into existence on every side. They are unable to keep loyal and efficent leaders. Great strikes, involving millions of toilers and billions of money, have crippled all activity and resulted in untold suffering. Money ultimately, always buys, undermines or crushes. The king, year by year, is more secure upon his throne. The people are, practically, the serfs of money. Independence no longer exists. But the spirit of manhood is not dead. The fire has been smothered, but there are smouldering embers,

red and hot, ready, when the bellows are applied, to burst into flames.

The political world is a seething caldron. It is operated by the same general methods as compel success in the world of commerce. Indeed, the princes of industry are the dictators of the government. Policy and polity are conjoined and the elections manipulated by jugglers in the interests of wealth. The influence of reformative agencies is rendered ineffective by legislative briberies and a corrupted judiciary. Equity and justice exist in name but are paralysed in action.

Intense jealousy and universal distrust prevail among the nations. Spies infest every capital. Taxes are exacted until the people go hungry. The oceans are policed. The world is shaken by the tramp of drilling soldiers. Diplomacy is successful, or not, according as the diplomats are backed by armies and navies. Peace is maintained, during fitful intervals, only by the exhibition of force. Wars are frequent, but the engines of destruction employed are so swift and terrible that their duration is brief.

The social world has become more inflexible with the advance of time. Pride and selfishness, poverty and lawlessness, are the bane

of the times. Wealth and poverty are in conflict. The people are top-heavy with self and ambition. A fever of indulgence among the rich entails increasing effeminacy. The pulses throb for pleasure. Luxurious display and fast living are the dominating forces. The middle classes ape the rich in attempted gratification of desire. Extravagance creates grievous burdens of debt. The masses are becoming impoverished and general wretchedness and squalor must increase. Ulimately the middle class will, practically disappear, and there will remain the very rich and the very poor. The former will be few, the latter many.

One of the most apparent and sad features of the age is the marked decadence of family life. The home is sadly demoralized. Parents of both sexes, yield up home duty and influence to the demands of club life. The prenatal destruction of children prevails. Divorce laws are lax, the divorce courts thronged and legal separations are secured upon the slightest pretext. Parental restraint and punishment of children are unpopular and result in disobedience and dishonor.

But the pursuit of pleasure is the zest and inspiration of life. The pursuit of wealth, only, is more intense, and this is that pleasure

may be bought. Richness of dress, palatial homes, lavish entertainment and splendid playhouses foster the spirit. Licentiousness is flagrant. Everybody travels. Athletic sports are most popular, taking precedence over intellectual recreations among the masses. The athletes are the heroes of the people.

In all these activities, exceeding zeal and energy are manifested. This is not the age of indolence. The drone is driven from the hive. But the fierce chase after wealth and pleasure tells on health. There are shattered nervous systems with which to be reckoned. The multitudes turn to drink and drugs for both quiet and stimulant. The last state is worse than the first.

Differences increase between capital and labor, employer and employee, the rich and the poor. As they multiply and become more intense, antagonisms increase. The relations are strained and each glare at the other waiting to find advantage. The strifes are frequently attended by riot, arson and bloodshed. The general perplexity is becoming universal. The social problem is a puzzle insuperably difficult. Governments interfere to little purpose. Socialistic schemes for the betterment of the people do not produce the desired con-

ditions. Lodges, leagues and secret societies likewise fail.

The waxing of ritualistic and formal ecclesiasticism, and the waning of vital religion, constitute another potential feature of the period among Protestant religious bodies. The aesthetic and elegant have displaced the spiritual. Wealth controls here, as everywhere. Intellectualism attacks Revelation. Schoolmen in high places frequently become arrogant and dogmatic. Speculative theology, criticism of the Bible, evolutionary theories, specious philosophies and like themes occupy the pulpit. The assaults on the Bible have destroyed veneration for it as the Word of God. The masses hold it in slight esteem and many jeer at it. The old doctrines are lightly regarded. The weakening of faith in the fundamental principles, which was the panoply of the church during its spiritual conquests, has sent the soldiery to war without shields and with leaden swords. The anchorage is sand and the people drift without hope.

But the church has a following, not less numerous and more select, from the standpoint of the world, than ever before. The embellishments of the spacious and elegant houses of worship appeal to every sense. The

music is that of the masters. The preachers are equipped with every attraction of nature and acquirement. Amusements are provided for the young. The social features cater to both body and mind. It is rational and material and the people, without being conscious of it, have become rationalists and materialists. They are not spiritual. The meetings for prayer are not popular. Only genius can attract the crowd.

Ritualism is the resurrection body of dead piety. In it, the backslidden in heart behold beauty. It has the form of godliness but not the power thereof. It can charm the senses but cannot feed the heart. The growth of ritualism and multitudinous forms and ceremonies spring forth spontaneously and luxuriantly from the soil in which piety found its grave. These things are greeted with effusion and embraced with delight. One can practice them and believe himself to be a lover of God rather than a devotee of the world.

Protestantism lacks coherence. Roman Catholicism, through unity of faith and polity, and by spectacular ceremonial, is acquiring a vast following. It maintains solidarity through rigid episcopal government and the federation of numerous beneficent societies

into which its laity is organized. These take the place among Catholics which secret societies and lodges, without ecclesiastical supervision, occupy so prominently in the Protestant and secular population. These adjuncts of Romanism are usually military in their character. The love of uniform and the pomp of parade satisfy the vanity of display so prevalent among men. They also exercise a tremendous political power, gaining through legislation, whatever is necessary to advance their interests. Occasional public demonstrations of their strength are graced by the presence of the great dignitaries of the church. These appear robed in their rich vestments and regalia of rank and office and attract multitudes of people over whom they exercise a deep and potent influence.

But in the midst of these growing conditions of worldly conformity there are two prominent exceptions: There is still salt remaining in the earth which has not lost its savor. Belief in the supernatural has not disappeared. In every church and community can be found those who hold to the old faith of the Bible. The divine purposes are still in force and the faithful accept the Word of God as their exponent. They maintain the deity of Jesus,

They live under His blood. They preach an adulterated Gospel. They believe in the return of the Master to this world and are watching for Him. The other exception is seen in the unusual missionary activity of the age. The conquest of the earth by war and commerce has been attended by the dispatch of missionaries to the new regions opened. It is the divine order. The gospel must first be preached among all nations before the end can come.

There is now in progress a considerable breaking up of sectarian fences. The political and commercial mergers of the world are being attended by like combinations of religious sects. The movement is regarded as broad and in harmony with the teachings of Christ. And so it is, but it is not deep. Christendom does not become more spiritual. There is an underflow of intolerance beneath it for all that is not in harmony with the teachings of the times. The iron hand is hidden by the silken glove.

The times are prolific with fakes, fads and cults in religious dress. There are many of them and some have attained vast followings. They usually present the mysterious, appealing to the credulity and curiosity of men, or set

forth only the benefits of the atonement, eschewing the divine life and shed blood They are Christians in name but eliminate the real Christ in His deity and death. Hoary heathen systems of religion, clad in new clothes and called by new names, have been transplanted from the lands of their birth into American and European soils. The more preposterous their claims the more followers they secure.

Such, in brief, is the condition of Christendom in the main aspects of human life. Men will exhaust their ingenuity and strength for betterment. They cannot remove the yoke. Whoever rejects salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, and the divine plan, will not find other emancipators in the world. We charge that existing ecclesiasticisms, as a rule, have rejected the plan of God for the restitution of all things. They are making effort to work out the restoration of the world to righteousness in their own way.

X

HE casting of Satan and his angels into the earth will be an event which will bring such trouble to the earth as its inhabitants never before have known:

"Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time," (Rev. xii. 12).

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people (Israel); and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." (Dan. xii. 1).

"For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," (Matt. xxiv. 21).

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations and perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's heart failing them for fear, and for looking after those

things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken," (Luke xxi. 25, 26).

This tribulation, while it will spend its greatest fury over Jerusalem and Palestine, will extend over the whole earth. From it, the church, as we have seen, is to be delivered, by translation to the heavenlies. This is according to the promise of Christ:

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man," (Luke xxi. 36).

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth," (Rev. iii. 10).

Every ray of light that comes to us indicates that the first resurrection of saints, and their transfiguration and translation to meet their Lord, will be accomplished silently and without spectacular display. The world will become cognizant of it only after it has occurred, and because of the sudden disappearance of such as are like the Lord. It seems probable, also, that the cemeteries and burial places

where the resurrected members of Christ's body were interred, will be irrupted and thrown into disorder. The tomb of Christ, who was the first fruits of them that slept, was opened before He came forth. In like manner, on the first Easter morning:

"The graves were opened; and many of the bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many," (Matt. xxvii. 52,53).

From these Scriptures, we have the right to anticipate the resurrection of the literal, material body and then the change to the spiritual and glorified bodies, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

The church is the "salt of the earth." To gether with the Holy Spirit, it is a restraining force upon the evil of the world. The world would have rotted long ago had it not been for the preserving salt. When it is removed and Satan and his angels make their appearance among men, every quiescent power of sin in Satan, his angles, demons men and will break forth into ungoverned and ungovernable rage. The arch-fiend will become incarnate in some man, known in the Bible as Antichrist. Demons will enter, control and

torment the people. Pandemonium will reign. There will be no power in the earth sufficient to check the unparallel fury of the enraged devils.

The "great tribulation" will be the heading up of tribulation forces and agents that long have been at work antagonizing the plan of God as it is being worked out through Jesus Christ and the church. The Scriptures inseparably join the appearance of the final Antichrist with the apostacy of the church:

"That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," (II. Thess. ii. 3, 4).

The history of the Papacy bears the infallible ear-marks set forth in the inspired prophecy. For many centuries its pretentious arrogance, blasphemous utterances and unscrupulous deeds of blood, and persecution, have been preparing a hot-bed rich with materials, from which the last pope, Antichrist, will spring up like Jonah's gourd, in a night. Everything that Antichrist is said to be, and do, has already been made manifest in the

line of Roman Pontiffs. They will all be done again, *by one man,* but the doing will be more intense and flagrant and on a greatly enlarged scale. The times will invest him with what he considers absolute power. He will sit in the temple of God, as God, and demand worship under penalty of death.

Temporal rulership, of which the Roman Pontiffs have been denuded, will be restored. The struggle to regain it is unceasing. The deadly wound will be healed. The end can already be seen. The movement of the Establishment of England toward the "mother church," and the unexampled and astounding growth of Romanism in the United States—the dominating government of the earth—indicate that the time cannot be far distant when the last pope will be chosen dictator of the ten confederated kingdoms, which will be the last form of human government on the territory of the old Roman Empire. The shadows are portentious and they grow deeper and more dreadful every day. The mystery of iniquity, which was already at work in the days of Paul, has never rested from its labors. It is sleepless and vigilant. Forgiveness of sins, transubstantiation, and infallibility will be crowned with the bald assumption of deity.

To establish this pretence, appeal will be made to force; for many, foremost among them the Jew, will not be disposed to yield worship to Antichrist. The armies and navies of the earth, vast in numbers, and armed with the deadliest weapons of the ages, will clash in the war of wars. The armaments are being prepared and the soldiers, by the tens of millions, are being drilled. The earth, left untilled during the struggle, will cease to yield her fruits. The carnival of death on the battlefields will be augmented by the wider swaths of corruption which famine will mow down and leave behind it. Pestilence will stalk forth at noonday from the heaps of the unburied dead and the tainted atmosphere will be alive with the germs of death.

Added to these horrors will be those of anarchy, the seeds of which already have been sown in all nations and among all classes of people. Lawlessness is the most prominent color in the Bible picture of the great tribulation. The waning power of government will be unable to control their subjects. Inflamed human passions, fanned by instigating demons, will break from every restraining influence. Without reason, man will lift up his hand against his brother man. Murder, arson and

rapine will join hands in the most awful revel of sin the world has ever known. It will be the climax of Satanic ingenuity and energy.

The anger of God Almighty will be poured forth upon the apostate Christendom. The exhibition of His wrath will strike terror to every heart. Plagues will ulcerate human bodies, springs and fountains run red with blood and the sun scorch the earth with a seven-fold heat. With it all, seismic disturbances, which are becoming more pronounced every year, will rock the ground, burst the mountains and drive the sea from its bed. The belching volcanos will bury whole districts in their deluges of molten lava. It will be the great day of the wrath of God Almighty. Peace will vanish from the earth.

The land of the Jew, and the Jew himself, as in many parts of the world during the long ages, will be the greatest sufferers. The cyclone will plow up Palestine with furrows of death and destruction. "Scattered and peeled," Israel has had many days of distraction, but this will be *the day of Jacob's trouble.* His children are already gathering upon their own soil to meet the cataclysm. When the time arrives, they will be there in great numbers. They cannot be diverted in their desire

to re-occupy their land. Two-thirds of them will perish and their deliverance will only be effected by the sudden appearance of Jesus Christ, who will split the Mount of Olives in twain for their escape and destroy their enemies with swift disease and awful death. Thereupon, they will instantly recognize Him as their Messiah and King. It will be the day of days. The Bible calls it *that* day.

How long will the tribulation last? Probably, seven years. The seventieth week of Daniel's seventy weeks, which were determined upon God's people remains, evidently, unfulfilled. The congestion of horrors, however, will not begin until the middle of the period, at which time Antichrist will take his seat in the temple and adopt coercive measures to compel men to pay him divine honors.

XI.

CONCERNING the day dawn and the arising of the day star in our hearts, Peter says:

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. . . . For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (II Pet. i. 19, 21).

Every great perplexing problem of our age, is, as we shall show, foretold in the Bible. The solution is also given. This was true also of the day when Jesus first came. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, who had relegated the prophecy to the junk plie, in these words:

"Ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (Matt. xvi. 3).

The Lord announced certain signs, by which His people, while they would not know the day and hour of His second coming, should not remain "in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." These signs are set

forth in numerous prophetic utterances showing the conditions of the world during the last days of the Gospel age. They are these same commercial, political, ecclesiastical and social signs. The study of these prophecies is not only timely and helpful, but it is of surpassing interest. They cannot fail. They are sure. Moreover, they are all converging toward the event of events.

We believe that the coming of the Lord into our atmosphere to call His church unto Himself, is imminent. It may occur at any time. All that remains to be done before the beginning of "the time of the end," is the further evangelization of the nations. While all the people of all nations have not yet heard the joyful tidings, the Gospel certainly has been preached in all nations. We cannot tell when God shall consider the work done. "Then shall the end be."

Now, if the time of the tribulation is determined by the last of Daniel's seventy weeks, which seems probable, then, the church will be seven years in the heavenlies with their Lord before He, they, and all the holy angels appear to the earth in the clouds of heaven, in power and great glory. The tribulation time and the time of the deliverance of the

saints, therefore, are identical. If we can show that the prophetic scriptures are now in process of fulfilment, concerning the conditions which precede and accompany these things we shall have proven the imminence of the end of the age.

There is no fact more apparent to-day to observing minds than the growing solidarity of the world. It is a matter frequently discussed from many standpoints. All Spirit taught students of the Word of God are impressed with the remarkable analogy between the present time and that which immediately preceded the first advent of Christ.

The ancient world was separated into numerous political divisions. Of the many tribes and kingdoms and tongues, the majority were petty, and all were proud. They were solitary and barbarous. Each had its own government, customs and language. But few boasted a literature. There was neither a generally understood language, nor other vehicle for the interchange of intelligence and thought. Spirituality had almost vanished from the earth. Jewish worship had become formal. Wars, waged by the ambition of selfish men, were the only compelling force. These con-

ditions existed for ages. They presented insurmountable barriers against the progress of Truth among men.

But a point of time arrived when Rome succeeded in welding all nations into one. The emperor decreed that all the world should be taxed. This was God's "fulness of time" and Jesus was born.

When Rome had completed her military roads to the ends of the earth; when her ships sailed every sea; when she had imposed a universal state language and polity upon all peoples; then, and not until then, was the Gospel delivered to the disciples. Pentecost occurred and the raging Pagan persecutions drove the preachers of the Truth over the highways of the continents and the waterways of the seas into every Roman province and city.

After the dissolution of the Roman Empire the world again fell into many parts and great darkness and ignorance prevailed. The Reformation checked the pretentious arrogance of the Papacy and gave real godliness a new opportunity to sway men through the preaching of the doctrine of justification by faith. But prophecy declares and facts indicate that when

the second advent of Christ occurs there will be but the merest glimmer of real faith among men.

The one surpassingly unique feature of this age is the growing unity of the race—*the entire race*. It began with steam and will end in a perfectly developed electricity. Every language and people are known and have, or will have the Bible in vernacular. The last of the hermit nations have been brought forth and set upon pedestals for their own enlightenment and the inspection of the world. Watts, Stephenson, Fulton, Morse, Field and Edison were set by God for the unification of men as Rome was set for the welding of the nations. To-day every nation knows everything of importance that transpired yesterday in every other nation. The solidarity of the world is bound up in the lightnings of heaven which are the steeds of God's chariot.

So shall the world instantly know its returned Maker and King. As the lightnings come out of the east, and shine even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.

The return of the Lord will end the Gentile season of grace and the Jewish period of punishment. We may, therefore, expect

to see contemporary signs of the disintegration of Gentile governments and evidences of Jewish restoration to Palestine. What are the facts?

There is a leaven of anarchy at work throughout the world which keeps every ruler and government in perpetual fear and unrest. This is particularly true of the governments which exist on the territory formerly ruled by the Roman Empire, which are to be broken to pieces and consumed,

"Like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them," (Dan. ii. 35).

The approaching dissolution of these Gentile kingdoms is marked by revolutionary and disintegrating forces, already well developed in their processes of overthrow. There can be no question that the monarchies of the old world are trembling to their fall.

What about the Jews? Addressing them, God says:

"That which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, we will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone. As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and the fury poured

out, will I rule over you; And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out," (Ezek. xx. 32-34).

The iron grip of the Turkish government on Palestine is already relaxed. This is true to such an extent that many Jews who have been acquiring wealth and standing in Gentile lands, and were beginning to give up the hope of Israel, are again lifting their eyes toward the land of Abraham. The dream of a Jewish state is stirring the dry bones of Israel. The crown, concerning which God said: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until He comes whose right it is; and I will give it to Him," (Ezek. xxi. 27). is looming up as a possibility before the Jewish vision. There has been but one attempt to reconstruct the Jewish state since the days of Christ. It was made by the apostate Emperor Julian. God interfered. The workmen were driven from their task by balls of fire miraculously appearing among them. The rightful Prince had not come.

But now, political disabilities have been removed. Any Jew who desires to do so, may

return to Palestine and make it his home. Many thousands of them are already on the ground. Great societies exists and much money has been raised to foster the enterprise. Jerusalem is being rehabilitated. Numerous colonies have been planted in various parts of the land. Railroads have been constructed and commerce and agriculture are creating new life in the country so long under the ban of God and man.

Another most powerful reason is conspiring to produce the result. The nations of Europe harbor a deep seated jealousy of one another. It is evident that the Turk must soon relinquish all claim to Syrian territory—probably all territory. Mutual suspicion of each other will prevent annexation by any other nation. European statesmen are, at the present time, seriously debating the problem whether the restoration of the Jews, as a nation, to their native land, will not be the best and easiest solution of the Eastern question. And the Jews—enough of them—are ready to do their part.

XII.

HE accumulation of wealth during the past third of a century has been wholly without precedent, in any age or land, during the history of the world. Crœsus, surrounded by the treasures of Lydia, and the fortunes of the profligate Roman patricians dwindle into insignificance when compared with the riches that have been amassed by private individuals during the present generation. This financial phenomenon is one of the unique and pronounced features of all business ventures since men began to traffic with one another. It stands forth so conspicuously that all the world wonders. The men who have made these colossal gains are the envy of their fellows among all nations. The Midas methods employed have been studied, sifted and analysed. They have also been imitated. The figures, representing the wealth held and controlled by single individuals are, literally, beyond the comprehension of the human mind.

The time was, within the memory of those now living, when a millionaire was a very ex-

ceptional man. There were but few of them. Their names were prominent because thy possessed a million of dollars. Men wondered if their eyes would ever behold a man so great? and, in case they did, what would he look like? Only a generation ago a man was counted in easy circumstances who had an income of a thousand dollars per year. If he was rated as being worth a hundred thousand dollars he was lifted above all ordinary mortals.

So swift and great has been the transformation that the millionaire is now counted only fortunate. He is common and may be met anywhere. If a man receives the adulation which the hundred thousand dollar man once commanded he must have several millions. There are now more owners of hundreds of millions than possessed millions three decades ago. The press discusses, and, doubtless, we soon shall have the billionaire. Many think one individual has already passed that mark.

The growth of wealth has, with very few exceptions, created a lust for soft living and luxury in the lives of those who have attained thereto. This is particularly noticeable in the lives of the children of those who have come into sudden and great affluence. Love of display has superseded simplicity. The old, sim-

ple life of the fathers, has been displaced by extravagant delicacy. Wantonness prevails. Can anybody doubt that this isolated and embossed feature of the centuries is the fulfilment of the following prophecy?

"Ye have heaped treasures together for (*in* R. V.) the last days," (James v. 3).

How have these treasures been acquired?

The discovery and application of new forces and inventions have made the opportunity. Combination of capital has enlarged the design and scope of effort. The actual capital employed in industrial enterprises, represented by stocks and bonds, has been watered. Legislation has been bought and favorable laws enacted. Laborers have been held down to the lowest possible living wage for their service of sweat and toil. The markets have been manipulated, production controlled, securities unloaded and the unsuspecting people fleeced.

Modern fortunes have been, with exceptions, amassed by unscrupulous methods which have been infringements on the rights and happiness of many helpless people who have suffered because of the avarice of those who built them up. Prophecy continues:

"Behold, the hire of the laborers, who have reaped down your fields, which is of you (these

rich men) kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth (Lord of hosts—all men). Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you," (James v. 4, 5, 6).

Labor unions and strikes have been the ineffectual protests of those who have suffered. They have been, and will be, without avail. Intrenched behind the bulwarks of wealth, the greatest force in human society, the captains of industry defy the attacks. The bulk and momentum of the octopus keep it moving. The suckers of the tentaculum are greed and they will continue to suck.

What will be the result? The growing pride, haughtiness and extravagance of the rich will exasperate those who consider that they have been ground down, or plundered, that the upper classes may live wantonly. As the tribulation times grow more and more strenuous, and the tension of lawlessness tightens, those who possess wealth—and the very holding of it, however attained, will be accepted as conclusive evidence against them—will be burned

with fire. The French Revolution was the earnest of the more fearful scenes that will be enacted during the tribulation carnival of universal lawlessness. Let us proceed with the prophetic utterance:

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire," (James v. 1-3).

Do any make reply that the Epistle of James is addressed to the twelve tribes, and, therefore, cannot apply to any but Jews? We answer: That the Jew is, everywhere, *the* prominent leader and backbone of the financial and business world, and that, as God is dealing especially with the Jews during the tribulation period, preparing them to be grafted back into the trunk of His plan, they will suffer first, and most. The Gentile plutocrat, however, will find that mobs of anarchists, in a frenzy for pillage and blood, will not be disposed to show mercy to any who are rich.*

The Holy Ghost, having delivered this startling prophecy through the pen of James, turns

to the suffering brethren and emphatically announces, by repetition, that they are to be patient under the trials they will be compelled to undergo, because when the conditions He has named come into existence, "*the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*" The situation will be exasperating enough but they are to restrain themselves while the Lord is working out the problem of their deliverance. Look again:

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and later rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." (James v. 7, 8).

Here is teaching which reveals the mind of Christ for the membership of His church during the time of the excesses of evil which will precede the tribulation horrors, from which they are to be delivered. They are not expected to spend themselves in the vain effort to abate the wrongs about them. Let the world beat its wings against the cage in which it has confined itself. Let it preach the reforms which it never practices. The duty of Christ's body

is that of patience. It will not be long. The Lord is coming to destroy the works of the Devil. He "doeth all these things."

We submit to the most incredulous that the state of affairs concerning the heaping up of riches, portrayed by James, has never existed before in human affairs. It exists now. The apostle declares that it will be a precursor of the speedy coming of the Lord.

The curse of the Almighty has been launched against such as pile up riches:

"Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, that there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth! In mine ears said the Lord of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitants," (Isaiah v. 8, 9).

Nor will this curse simply ultimate in desolation. Great riches stultify the whole man while they fatten him for the shambles. As a fever, they burn up the juices of his soul. They force his children to dishonor him. His ears grow weary and his heart fails him for fear as he listens to the din of accusations from those he has wronged, and beholds the suffering generated by his covetousness. Nor will the pouring forth of his gain into public in-

stitutions and monuments for the perpetuation of his name mitigate his doom. Like the shade of Nemesis, it will stalk by his side, a ghost of wailing and tears while he lives, and, finally, with skeleton fingers, strangle the life out of his pampered body. "Then whose shall those things be?"

"As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool," (Jer. xvii. 11).

XIII.

HE rescue of the Bible from the desuetude into which it had fallen during the dark ages, its restoration to the hands of the people, and the activity of its friends to establish it as the revelation of God, and of its enemies to degrade it to the level of literature, has resulted in the fulfilment of one of the most striking of the prophecies concerning the last days. God had been instructing Daniel with reference to the events which would immediately precede the establishment of the kingdom and He said to him.

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased," (Dan. xii. 4).

The study of the Bible during the past century has been very prevalent among all classes of people, especially scholars. The fact that many have attempted to belittle it, mutilate it, disparage it by criticism, read evolutionary and speculative theories into it, and pervert its plain meaning by so-called "spiritual" interpretation, does not weaken the

truth of its restored prominence. *It has been studied as never before,* and its study has resulted in our greatly increased knowledge of its contents. These researches have developed a universal activity. Literally, "many have run to and fro and knowledge has been increased."

The Word of God "is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," says the Psalmist. By whoever, and in whatever way the Bible is used, it must shine. The light it sheds leads those who receive it into the way of eternal life. To such as reject it, it becomes only an *ignis fatuus,* guiding human pride into the swamps. But it is always *a light.* Serious investigation will establish, to the satisfaction of any reasonable mind, this declaration: The peoples who have been searching the Scriptures have been lighted into the amazing discoveries which make our age the greatest of history. Steam and electricity, with all their manifold applications, have come from England, America, and Germany; and not from Russia, Spain, and Mexico. Many have been spiritually benefitted by the study; multitudes have not; but all have received the reflex material blessings which have accompanied the larger understanding of the Word of God.

And so it has transpired that, while the study of the Bible has been prosecuted with great activity, and has resulted in greatly enlarged knowledge of it, the renascence has also, and just as literally, been responsible for such world-wide travel, and the acquirement of such stores of secular knowledge, that we are astonished that Daniel was permitted to see it all twenty-five centuries before it came to pass.

Considerably less than one hundred years ago, the only means known for human transit were pedestrianism, animal conveyance, wind and water. Travelers were few and always celebrities. Their recountals of experiences, in our own and foreign countries, were absorbed with eager interest. A foreign missionary had never been seen, nor even thought of, by the great majority of church members. When an individual announced his intention to make a journey of five hundred miles, the few newspapers had a leader for weeks; and when he was about to start, the neighbors assembled to give him a parting farewell. Many wondered if he ever would return from so long a journey.

To-day, we find the word "pedestrian" nearly obsolete. The horse and stage have

almost disappeared as a means of travel. Wind and sails are employed only for freighting, or pleasure by those to whom speed and time are no object. Not only are pre-steam vehicles now preserved as antiquaries, but the first steam locomotive in America is exhibited as a relic of a past age, to show, by comparison with recent perfected machinery, what gigantic strides of progress have been made in three generations.

Well may we pause to inquire, "What hath God wrought?" Billions of passengers travel on the world's railroads, the mileage of which numbers tens of billions, every year. Great ocean greyhounds swiftly plow every sea carrying millions to trans-world destinations. Electric cars whiz along rural roads, gathering traffic at every farm house, laying the city in the lap of the country. The chariots of Nahum flash and jostle in the streets, a literalized dream of luxury and pleasure. Soon the air ships will cleave the atmosphere with swifter speed than any device for human travel that yet has been developed.

People are traveling everywhere, and they go all the time. The man who does not travel is the rare exception. The man who is to go a thousand miles thinks so little of it that

his next door neighbor is not acquainted with his design. The trip is an incident of eighteen or twenty hours. Excursions, the expense of which is within the reach of the masses, not only run to every point of interest and pleasure, but compass the earth. The Lord's day is no longer sacred. The people want to travel seven days in the week.

The increase of knowledge is as pronounced as is that of travel. Ignorance is being driven out of the world. It was not uncommon, as late as the Elizabethan period, and the days of William Shakespeare, for the nobles of England to be unable to either read or write. So little value was attached to these accomplishments that aristocratic youths were counselled rather to perfect themselves in the manly sports. Riding, hunting, and gaming absorbed them. Women were not expected to know letters. Shakespeare's daughter, Judith, could neither read nor write.

After the war for independence had been won, America forged to her place at the head of the nations as the patron of popular education. Certain designated parts of the public domain were set apart by the national and state governments, the proceeds of which were devoted to education. Taxes were levied

for common schools and for the establishment of state institutions for higher learning. Every influence was employed to impress the people with the value of education.

But the reclaiming of American soil from the forests was a great tax on the time and strength of the pioneers. As late as 1850 comparatively little progress had been made in scholarship. Our youth found it impossible to attend the schools provided except during the winter months. Only the "three R's"—the rudiments of learning—were acquired by the masses. The college graduate was a marked man. Subsequent to this time, however, and especially after the civil war, the importance of education began to be appreciated. It was seen that the higher education was an open door to enlarged opportunity. Sectarian interest was aroused and many religious institutions of learning were planted and endowed. Technical schools, of various kinds, sprang into existence.

It now appears that we have more schools than we are willing to support—more than are needed. One can scarcely go a block on a city street without being confronted by the sign of some kind of a school. They are established to teach, not only every profession

and trade, but business methods, agriculture, forestry, civil, electrical, and mining engineering, elocution, stenography, designing, painting, decorating, cooking, sewing, dancing, sparring—in fact, every occupation known to human life, even begging, has its school.

In addition to these methods for increasing knowledge, it has come to be literally true that "of the making of many books there is no end." Authorship, but recently, was counted a badge of distinction. Writers on almost every subject are now common—many of them too common. Books, periodicals and pamphlets, printed by the train load, flood the country. They may be either good or bad, but they convey knowledge of some sort, and are read. Perfected postal, express and freight facilities of transit, carry them quickly and cheaply into every nook and corner of the world. Within the lifetime of many yet living, a few books, generally a much prized and read Bible, a Pilgrim's Progress and a volume or two held in perpetuity as heirlooms, constituted the literary possessions of a respectable family. Books of some sort are now the most common articles in every home.

The press of the world is thought by many

to have supplanted the pulpit as an educative influence among the people. We are disposed to so regard it. Certainly many more people read the newspapers than attend the churches, and they do it every day of the week, both morning and evening. Many read them when they should be at church. The circulation of the daily and weekly newspapers is so perfectly enormous, increases so rapidly and pours into the minds of the people such a steady flow of intelligence that we cannot even approximate the ever growing influence. The press is very potent in shaping the life and destiny of all peoples. We are happy to record the fact, that, among all the mass of literature, a good percentage is religious. The churches and Bible societies have been quick and diligent to use printer's ink. The great telegraph and telephone systems, of course, are large factors in the world's travel, business and education.

One other agent, exercising a far reaching educative influence in all parts of the civilized world, is found in the great summer schools, assemblies, conventions and conferences. These are attended by multitudes during their vacations from work. They are very popular and combine recreation with learning. The

schoolmen eagerly embrace the opportunities they offer to disseminate information concerning the specialities they represent.

It will be readily seen, from this very brief presentation of facts, that the human race has never before had set before it such facilities to acquire knowledge; that it has advantaged itself by accepting the privilege; that the possession of knowledge has come to be a necessity for good standing among men; and that all this marvelous increase of knowledge is a phenomenon of the immediate times in which we live.

The point made in clinching the argument is, that prophecy declares that the running of many to and fro, and the increase of knowledge is to occur in "the time of the end." These things never occurred before; their active processes are now before our eyes; therefore, we are living in the "time of the end." These are the last days of this age. Travel and education will, probably, absorb the people more and more until the last.

XIV.

HE days of the first advent of Jesus were attended by a violent demonstration of evil spirits on the earth. Its manifestations were apparent in the frequent seizure and possession of men, by demons. Nothing has equalled it, before or since. Apparently, Satan massed his forces over Palestine during the days the second federal head of the race was undergoing trial as the representative of men. Jesus spent a large part of His time, during His ministry, rescuing the afflicted by casting devils from those in whom they had taken up their abode.

Predictive Scripture is very positive in its declarations, that, during the last days, both the church and the world will be tormented in a similar manner:

"Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light," (II. Cor. xi. 14).

"For there shall come false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect," (Matt. xxiv. 24).

"And for this cause (because they received not the love of the truth) God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie," (II. Thess. ii. 11).

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils," (I. Tim. iv. 1).

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty," (Rev. xvi. 13, 14).

All these passages have specific reference to the last days, except that which speaks of Satan as an angel of light. None will dispute that he retains the same power he had in the days when Paul wrote to the church at Corinth. The last verses describe a manifestation that will occur near the end of the tribulation. It will be the final deception, this age, which Satan will practice upon men. Not so intense, but equally seductive, are the sallies from hell which precede the last one.

From the passages quoted we deduce the following:

1. Satan has the power to appear unto the church as a minister of good.

2. This counterfeit representation of good is so perfect as to stagger the faith of the very elect.

3. In the last days strong delusions will be permitted to affect the minds of such as do not love the truth.

4. Devils will teach doctrines. Their teachings will so nearly resemble the truth that some will depart from the faith.

5. The teaching of these false doctrines will be credentialed by signs and wonders.

Have our times developed any special or startling correspondences to these predicted conditions of the last days? Are there any anti-Truth doctrines being promulgated that puzzle Christians, entice men away from the churches, and show signs and wonders to testify that they are from God?

There are! They are found in all parts of the world! We need not go beyond the boundary lines of our own country to discover them. Indeed, they are so bold and open that we need not even search for them. Their Satanic origin may always be detected by two

things: the denial of the deity of Jesus Christ; and the rejection of the blood atonement He made for sinners. The "new thought," in which the "new ways" to eternal life are promulgated, is attractive to men because, while they have an inherent desire to worship God, and for immortality, they shrink from the denial and crucifixion which the only way God has provided demands of them. The earthly pilgrimage of the sincere follower of Jesus is not a pleasant one for the flesh and the fleshy mind to contemplate. If they can attain unto eternal life in some other way, not so exacting, they are willing to make the effort.

Seeing the askance with which men regard the cross of Christ, and cognizant of the chafing in the churches because of the restrictions of Christianity, what does Satan do? Assuming the disguise of an angel of light, he casts the bait of beautiful systems of doctrine, in many respects identical with Truth, except, that the two essential and fundamental doctrines to salvation are always skillfully eliminated. The deity of our Lord is hidden by the voluminous teachings of human brotherhood, in which Jesus is admitted to stand first. Denying the reality of sin, these cults find no use for the shed blood and leave

it out of their reckoning. They quote Scripture to the effect that "the blood is the life," and teach that the life is the only thing which interests us. It is another case of Satanic perversion of Scripture.

Buddhism is an ethical system of occult philosophy, promulgated by Buddha, in Hindustan, nearly 2500 years ago. It is still, the religion of about one-third of the human family. It has to do with those things which are hidden from human observation and which are, therefore, mysterious. Its principal teachings are, that God is an impersonal principle of good; that the human being is constituted of two bodies—that of the flesh, which can be seen; and another celestial, or astral body, which is invisible; and that at death, while the body of flesh is resolved back to dust, the astral body is reincarnated in some other fleshy domicile, and thus, the conscious man continues, in various habitations, to live on forever.

This venerable, heathen system of lies has been imported into Christian lands, adapted to the teachings of the New Testament by the assertion that the "Light of the World," and the "Light of Asia," are identical, and embraced by a large number of people who call

themselves "advanced thinkers." It is called Theosophy. Its adherents claim to have dealings with, and probably do, receive intelligence from invisible beings. The study of the occult, always interesting to the curious, because God has veiled the field of eschatology from the vision of the world, has proven so attractive as to seduce many from the way of the cross.

Christian Science is the most recent and heaven-like production the devil has yet turned out of his shop. It is smooth, like oil. It is as beautiful as polished marble. It is radiant with the angelic light of the transformed Lucifer. In it we find the predicted effort to deceive the very elect. He steps to the front, not with a pitchfork, but with a Bible, in his hand. And he reads it; and then he interprets it—with a "key." He claims to be engaged in the work of restoring what the worldly and unspiritual churches have lost. He admits and urges the practice of every virtue taught in the Book. He asserts that he has no personal existence; that he is only a principle of evil; that sin does not exist; it is only aberration of "mortal mind;" that the way of deliverance from what we think is sin is just to think that we are good, and that will

result in our becoming good. We are to do it all ourselves. We cannot analyse the conglomeration during metamorphosis, because there is really nothing to metamorphose; but, in some way, the mixture clarifies and we are saints. Nothing is transmuted into what it was before.

And then the wily perverter of Truth adjusts the train of his silk dress (he is a female, this time) and says, "I will prove all I have said to be true. I will heal the sick." Now there is, according to the teaching, no such thing as sickness; but he does that. The demonstration of miracle isn't much of a job for him, after all. But the gaping throngs gaze with wonder and shout that a new goddess has fallen from the skies. And the dollars are attracted—lots of them. Then, forthwith, temples for devil worship, magnificent and costly, chaste and esthetic, spring into existence, of which he is the life. From their altars he distributes the best counterfeits of Christian fruit the world has ever been permitted to gather.

What is the secret of it all? Just as Christian Science says, the church has become worldly and has largely lost its spiritual power. With it have gone the signs that were to con-

firm the preaching of those who believe in Christ. Sickness is one of the results of sin, of which Satan is the instigator. In order that he may confirm his church among men, and secure worshippers for himself, he withdraws the power by which he makes men sick, and they get well.

The doctrines preached by Christian Science are not the doctrines that will save the souls of men. They are doctrines which embellish the lives of men with the counterfeit graces of righteousness. They will not reach beyond the grave. There is no eternal foundation under them. When the fury of the storm bursts over this fragile house, it will fall; and great will be the fall of it. Sin exists, and the Son of God died to abolish it. The system rejects sin, the only begotten Son of God, and the sacrifice of His life that sin might be put away. Satan has skillfully extracted the kernel of the Gospel and delivered the shell of the nut to his dupes for a plaything. False prophets have shown signs and wonders to deceive the very elect, and God has sent a strong delusion that they should believe a lie, because they received not the love of the Truth. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly

that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits."

Spiritual evil is designed to appeal to every class of people. If Theosophy and the occult make advances to the educated, and Christian Science and its healing appeal to the refined and suffering, then, equally adapted is Modern Spiritualism to the bestial natures of the coarse and sensual. We suspect that the first two are operated by the spirits who were cast out of heaven with Lucifer and the last by the demons, whose great anxiety seems to be to find a place of abode. The blasphemy, vulgarity, and obscenity of the demons who manifest themselves through mediums is frequently so pronounced and revolting as to disgust honest investigators searching for truth. Their treatment of the mediums, who must submit their mental and physical natures to the spirits in order to their manifestation, is cruel to the last degree. If, as we believe, the demons are the disembodied spirits of a race of pre-Adamic inhabitants of the earth, who, renegade from God, are undergoing punishment for apostacy, their conduct may be taken as an indication of the depths to which they fell.

The claim of these spirits, that they are the

departed friends of those with whom they converse through the mediums, is wholly at variance with the teachings of the Bible. They are not the dead of our race. There can be no question, however, that evil spirits can and do break through the sphere of their punishment and communicate with men who are willing to disobey God's prohibitive order placed upon all human traffic with familiar spirits. The desire of men to receive intelligence from beyond the grave, and, especially, to obtain messages from departed loved ones, is the weakness played upon by the forces of evil to induce them to commit the great sin that undid Saul. It does not seem to occur to those who seek lost friends in dark places, that the spirits with whom they converse can only be impersonators of the ones sought. Here, in common with all things with which Satan is connected, deception is practiced. He is a liar and the father of it. Those who will persist in their search after forbidden knowledge incur great risk. God has uncovered in revelation all it is well for us to possess while we remain in the flesh.

The votaries of spiritualism are very numerous. An investigation will surprise any who desire to acquaint themselves with the facts.

The indications are that, as the age proceeds to its close, demonism will become very prevalent, overshadowing both Theosophy and Christian Science. These forms of the occult will not satisfy either Satan or his worshippers.

In turning from this subject we would remind the incredulous that the Bible predicts a trinity of spiritual seducers in the last days; that they are here; that they all have set up business in Christendom within a yew years; and that the cults through which they carry on their labors to draw men away from God are, at the present time, very active and successful.

XV.

NDER the figure of a harlot, seated upon a beast (the world power), prophecy forecasts the supremacy of the Papacy in the time of the end. Her identification is established by "the seven mountains on which the woman sitteth." Her harlotry consists in her having left her first love, Jesus, and her conformation to the world, its wisdom and works, in order that she may possess its kingdoms, honor, glory, and pleasure. This was the same stumbling block over which Israel fell into divine disfavor and rejection. They insisted on a king, in order that they might be like the other nations. Conformation to the world—worldliness—will precipitate the final and quick judgment upon apostate Christendom.

The offer of Satan to bestow upon Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them for one act of worship, and the subsequent attempt of the people to divert Him from the purpose for which He came into the world— that of becoming a sacrifice for sin—

by making Him a king, which effort was instantly detected by the Spirit-filled Sacrifice as having been instigated by Satan also, were temptations overcome by the Bridegroom. The bride has proven insufficient to endure these tests. Yielding to the seductions of the world, the enemy of Christ, she has contracted worldly alliances which have caused her Lord to designate her as a harlot.

We have already shown the destiny of the church, as of the Jew, to be the rulership of the world. But the plan contemplates that she shall attain to this end by being "married to another, even to Him that was raised from the dead." The time for the consummation of the marriage, and the elevation to dominion, is definitely fixed at the return of the Lord to the earth. For the church to lust after worldly power and glory, and accept and enjoy these things before He arrives, involves the betrayal of the Bridegroom. She was espoused, and placed in training under the Holy Ghost, to become "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." The Lord expects, when He comes from heaven after her, that she shall be "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints." In this garb, alone, can she be

presented to Him. Not only she, but even the guests of the wedding supper, who are without the "wedding garment," must be cast out.

The apostacy of the church began under Constantine, in A. D. 325, after she had maintained her chastity during three centuries of frightful persecution. With a few beautiful exceptions of individual and local loyalty, it has continued ever since. Not only has the bride accepted a throne from the kings of this world, but she has fought, intrigued, persecuted the saints, and made compromise with the world, in order to retain and extend this power. Conformation to the world is as true of Protestantism as of Romanism. We cannot see that the Lord will distinguish between Romanism and Protestantism in the final catastrophy that will overtake apostate Christendom.

The Roman Catholic Church is rapidly forging to the front in America. In 1905, with 14,104 priests, and 11,637 churches, she gained 192,272 adherents to her communion; while all Protestant bodies, including Mormons, Christian Scientists, Jews, Spiritualists, Theosophists and Unitarians, with 140,286 ministers, and 189,971 churches, made but 326,883

converts. Protestant bodies in the United States now have 19,714,039 members; while the Catholics have 10,915,251. These figures are recent and authentic. The rate of Catholic increase during the past fifteen years has been nearly double that of evangelical Protestantism. With the same proportion of gains made during another period of like duration as that which has passed since the Civil War, which many of us remember, the Catholics will have overtaken the Protestants and this will become a Roman Catholic country.

The United States has already become the dominant nation of the world. As she leads, the world will follow. Catholic supremacy in America will center the vision, and influence all nations. Our national prestige has already secured these results along other lines. Progressive and successful, we are regarded with admiration. It does not require any stretch of the imagination, with the forces already in operation, and they must increase and intensify, to see a Catholic America.

It will be well for us to look, a little more in detail, at some of the influences which are effecting the disintegration of Protestantism. The most prominent of these is, that she has not been working according to God's plan

given to the church at the beginning of her career. Instead of spending her money, and employing her strength and talent in the evangelization of the world, she has settled down to the selfish and comfortable pastime of building splendid edifices in which to worship, and to educate the children of the world. No protest can be entered against the Christian education of her own children and ministry, but when the church spends the Lord's money on numerous institutions and endowments for the secular education of the children of the world, while world-wide evangelism—the one aggressive duty she was commanded to execute—suffers, she lays her throat bare to the poniard of the enemy The work of the church in foreign missions has been a burlesque on the great commission.

Moreover, in the selfish work in which she has been engaged, the church has exalted herself, instead of God, before the world. Her work has been largely for the advance of sectarianism, in place of the exaltation of Christ. As one church official expressed it, "I want to see a (certain sectarian) spire in this city six inches higher than that of any other denomination." Sectarian fires have been illy concealed, and fierce, for a hundred

years. The conflicts have also absorbed enormous wealth. The division of the forces has weakened the army, entertained jealousies, have driven the Spirit away, and we have lost the promised, great victories of faith because we had no faith.

The avidity with which Protestant buzzards have pounced upon the Bible, of late years, tearing it to pieces as if it were carrion for the delectation of their faithless intellects, has been a sorry experience for the church. Not only has it weakened her position before the world, but it has engendered pride in her ministry, and pulverized the solid and sure foundation upon which her victorious fathers once stood. A Bible full of interrogation points is a groundwork of sand. If we do not believe it we cannot make others believe it. The result has been a growing imbecility, infidelity and formalism. Attempts to bridge the quagmires into which we have fallen, by reformative and other projects, must end in disappointment.

It was not without cause that Paul wrote to Timothy that, in the last days, men would have "a form of godliness but deny the power thereof." This could only refer to the church, since, where else could we look to find "the

form of godliness." Nor does the apostle attempt to prescribe any remedy for the disease. It is incurable. No church has ever been reformed. Luther came out of Romanism with a new organization, and Wesley had to leave, practically, the state church of England, to launch Methodism. We can almost feel the sadness of the faithful heart of Paul as he looks at the ecclesiastical chaos at the end of the age and adds the command to his son in the Gospel, "from such turn away." These have become "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

The result of the "falling away" is, that "in the last days perilous times shall come." Look at the fearful picture resultant upon the casting away of religious faith:

"For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and

never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith," (II. Tim. iii. 1-8).

We want to put the question: Does not the present age fit the inspired picture as if it just had been lifted from the stone of engravement? Let the reader direct the meditative thought to the contemplation of business, domestic, social, political and ecclesiastical conditions that come within the scope of his knowledge, and then make honest reply to his own heart. These are the days when we of the light should be awake. God is trying to arouse His people from their slumbers. The cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh!" has gone forth. When He arrives those without oil in their lamps will be shut out.

We do not care to dwell upon these things. Our only desire is to arouse some sleeper. The thought of what is now transpiring, and of what present conditions must ultimately become before relief arrives, makes the heart sick! We are accused of pessimism. So be it! It is because we find it both in the Word of God and see it in the state into which world affairs have already fallen. But through it all, we behold the shining of the most glorious optimism of the ages.

XVI.

IT is a delight to find a rift in the gathering tribulation clouds. All preachers are not proud; nor have all the members of the churches become worldly. In the midst of formality and relaxed faith God has His "little flock." In nearly every church will be found a few spiritual and devoted adherents. They are the souls that weep and pray over waning spiritual power. They compose the prayer meeting bands. Many of them never hear the coming of Jesus preached from the pulpits of the churches they attend, but they are like Him because they love Him, and they will be ready to meet Him when He arrives. They feel the peril of increasing wickedness, though they are unable to explain their apprehension. Let us read another of the great prophet's "time of the end" predictions:

"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand," (Dan xii. 10).

Who are the wise? Let the patient man answer:

"Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding. (Job xxviii. 28).

What will be the end of the wise? Let the prophet make reply:

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3).

And then it will be of advantage to us to read what the beloved disciple, in his very old age, was inspired by the Spirit to write:

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear, what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that has this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure," (I John iii. 2, 3).

Jesus in the introduction to His Sermon on the Mount expressed the same thought to His disciples:

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." (Matt. v. 8.)

The body of Jesus, very soon after His resurrection, became a spiritual body. Early

Easter morning, Mary Magdalene met Him. She was, probably, making effort to touch Him, for He said to her, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father." But, afterwards, He said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side." The supposition is, that, subsequent to the resurrection, and after His conversation with Mary, but previous to His meeting with the disciples, He ascended to the Father and received His glorified body. This is in harmony with other Scripture. He "was the first fruits of them that slept." Death could never again pass upon Him. That body could appear, or vanish, at His will. Ours will be like it.

We are taught that God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit as well as in truth. Not the Bible alone, but the Holy Ghost, as well, is essential to worship. When Jesus comes in His spiritual body, only such as have been spiritually purified will see Him. This is the reason we must cleanse ourselves "of all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." This also explains why those to whom the appearing of the Lord has become

the "glorious hope," "purify themselves even as He is pure." Only the pure in spirit will receive the glorified and spiritual bodies and see the Lord at His appearing.

Now Daniel declares that in "the time of the end" while surrounded by the wicked who do wickedly, "many shall be purified, and tried and made white." We have the right, therefore, to expect that, during the last days spiritual energy will develop on the earth among the followers of Jesus, directed toward their purification. What has been the development of faith in this matter?

The uncovering of intelligence concerning the Holy Ghost and His ministry, during the past generation, has been so marked as to attract universal attention to His office and work. This is true both as to the pulpit and the press. A most frequent topic of public worship, and prayer meeting consideration is "being filled with the Spirit," and growing "the fruit of the Spirit" in our lives. A profuse literature has been developed relating to the primacy of the Holy Ghost in the church. Numerous consecration meetings are held that the necessary surrender may be made to receive Him. Holiness bands and associations have been established to promote the doctrine.

Indeed, in the church, this activity, though very much less popular, and attracting but few people, has been hardly less conspicuous than the counter abandonment to secularism.

Those who have yielded themselves to Spirit guidance have not found an easy road in which to travel. They have been "tried." Quiet, but real, ostracism, has been their portion. They have been compelled to drink the Lord's cup of suffering and death. Like Him, they have been "perfected through suffering." The ordeal, sooner or later, if they abide, purges the grossness from the flesh, and the fleshly mind, and they emerge from the furnace refined for the Bridegroom. So, it should be counted "all joy when ye fall into divers trials."

Coetaneous with the movement for spiritual purification has been that of evangelization. Finding Himself unable to fill His table at the marriage supper with invited guests because of sordid, worldly excuses, the King sent His servants into the highways to search out and compel an attendance. This truth applies to the church as well as to the Jews. In the Salvation Army, a multitude of missions, and many similar organizations, nearly all of them wholly independent of the churches, do we see

a latter day realization of this significant parable of the marriage of the King's Son. Many in the churches, who are unable to obtain spiritual food and congenial associations and occupation, attend these lowly places, and, while they must often crucify their refined sensibilities to do so, they find opportunity to wash immortal pearls from slum placers. Thus will the wedding be furnished with guests.

The probabilities are, that the prophecies referring to the "latter rains," is a prediction of world-wide revival just before the tribulation. If so, we may already see its beginnings in the great meetings conducted by many evangelists now in the field. The need is so clearly seen and greatly felt by all, even by those who feel themselves lifted above this sort of work, and the prayers for a revival have been so importunate, that the realization of this probable prophecy would be "like rain on the mown grass."

But the most blessed and hopeful of all good signs is the recent enlarged, missionary interest manifest in many centers. This, also is contemporary with the revived preaching of the personality of the Holy Ghost. It has always been His desire, for He was sent to energize the church for this very purpose:

"Tarry ye in the City of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke xxiv. 49).

"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall (consequent upon that power) be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth," (Acts i. 8).

Ease in Zion has ever been attended by spiritual stagnation and backsliding. There is little difference in the results which accrue, whether an individual or church does nothing, or if they work from selfish motives. Both conditions of life are enervating to the soul, and harden the heart. Real satisfaction can never be found in ease, softness or selfish activity. But there is great joy in obedience and a steady glow of restfulness, even in weariness, in doing for others. The "peace which passeth all understanding" has been discovered by but few people. It comes when, self wholly eliminated, we do as unto the Lord, for those who are most needful. Such work always commands the presence and blessing of God.

The most needful people in the world are the heathen. Our commission from the Mas-

ter is to carry the Gospel to them. We have scarcely played at our legitimate work. Disobedience has resulted in unrest and debilitation. We are great sufferers and do not know how serious is our trouble. What shall we do? Turn away from our hurtful habits! The missionary church becomes, not only a hive of quiet industry, but a fountain of preennial joy. God's design for His people was, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age," (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

The present quickening of the missionary zeal in some branches of the church, the Student Volunteer energy, the many non-sectarian and inter-denominational efforts, and the fact that even numerous individuals are going forth, uncredentialed, save as the Holy Ghost vouches for them, unmistakably indicate the intention of the Lord to be that the nations of this world shall speedily hear the Gospel. We cannot close this chapter without urg-

ing the plea that those who read will pray themselves into the Lord's mind respecting this matter, and do with all their might and money, the work that must be fulfilled during this last hour of the day. "Then shall the end be."

XVII.

HE third section of the plan of God is the divine restoration of Israel to their land, and their elevation to the glorious destiny for which they were originally called out:

"I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up," (Amos ix. 11).

The wealth of prophecy concerning the restoration of Israel is so great that positive embarrassment is experienced in selecting from it such passages as will give the reader the clear, but restricted vision which our limits compel. The re-graffing of Israel back into the trunk of the divine plan will be accomplished on a scale worthy of the God who does the work.

Gathered in considerable numbers on their own soil, but decimated by the persecutions of the Antichrist and the armies of the ten kingdoms which he leads, the Jews will, finally, at the close of the tribulation, occupy two positions for defense. One will be at Megiddo

(Armageddon) on the Plain of Esdraleon, about sixty miles north of Jerusalem. The other will be in Jerusalem, itself, where they will be beleagured. Mighty armies from the North (probably Russia and Germany acting as allies) will have descended upon them "to take a spoil." The enemy at Armageddon, vast in numbers and armament, will be overthrown by the divine judgment. "I will turn thee back, and put a hook into thy jaws," is the stern prediction. Five-sixths of them will be destroyed.

"I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord," (Ezek. xxxviii. 22, 23).

The captured weapons of the destroyed army will make fuel for Israel for seven years.

The enemy encamped about Jerusalem will have drawn the lines very close. Indeed, it appears that the city will be actually taken, outrages perpetrated and half its inhabitants doomed to captivity:

"Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth in captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city," (Zech. xiv. 1, 2).

Then, at the point of time when utter ruin and desolation confront the helpless people, Christ shall appear and effect their deliverance by miracle:

"Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south..... And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints. with thee," (Zech. xiv 3, 4, 5).

"And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall consume

away while they shall stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor," (Zech. xiv. 12, 13).

Antichrist, himself is to be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming. The spirit of Satan, who indwells him will be chained and imprisoned during the thousand years.

With all His angels and saints at hand to do His bidding, Christ will immediately set about the work of comforting the dazed and astonished Jews. The scales that have blinded them during the ages of their rejection of Him, will fall from their eyes. They will recognize Him by the prints of the nails in His hands. His compassion and forgiveness will shine forth in the riches of His grace. Through the tears of their sorrow the people will see the rainbow of hope. They will acknowledge Him as their King, and He will receive them as His people.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye My people saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusa-

lem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins," (Isa. xl. 1, 2).

The return of Christ will be signalized by great physical changes in and about Jerusalem. The city will be elevated above all the surrounding hills. She will be the crown of glory for the whole earth. The land about it will become a fruitful plain. The very location and details of these changes are made known to us in the sure word of prophecy. The house of the Lord, on Mount Zion, will overlook the whole country. From these heights, out of the rock upon which the new temple will stand, streams of living water will flow forth. The Mediterranean Sea will receive it on the one hand, and the Dead Sea on the other. The waters of the Dead Sea will be healed. On either side of these rivers will grow trees which will yield their fruit every month. Greatly enlarged, and beautified and enriched by the wealth that shall flow into it from the nations, Jerusalem will become the joy of the whole earth.

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the tops of the moun-

tains; and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow into it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," (Micah iv. 1, 2).

"And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed; it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued forth out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine," (Ezek. xlvii. 12).

"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be," (Zech. xiv. 8).

"Behold the day come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over

against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath," (Jer. xxxi. 38, 39).

"The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing," (Isa. xxxv. 1, 2).

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt," (Amos ix. 13).

"And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vinyards and eat the fruit of them," (Isa. lxv. 21).

Both Israel and Judah, reunited, will constitute one nation and have one King, as in the days of David. Their nation will be firmly rooted, the first, most glorious and influential on the earth. Nothing in descriptive literature compares with the graphic and glowing predictions of the Hebrew seers, as they depict the glory of the King and the blessedness of their redeemed, Messiah-ruled country.

And, hand in hand with all this temporal prosperity will be one religion. Thank God

for the prospect. The splendid worship of the hero King of Israel, the Psalmist David, Christianized by the very presence of the Christ, is to be re-established. Its fallen ruins will be set up. Such a thing as sect will be unknown. From the mountain of the Lord's house the notes of praise and adoration for the King will sound forth to the world's remotest bounds. The material and spiritual will blend as perfectly as the divine and the human were merged in the Messiah. The harmonies of the mighty oratorios will sweep the nations until their senses will be ravished and the desire born to worship with those whose hearts are filled with such music. "Blessed be His glorious name forever; let the whole earth be filled with His glory."

The lost ten tribes of Israel will be recovered, and the Jews will be gathered from all the ends of the earth to which they have wandered. The faithful dead of Israel are to be raised and made partakers of this glory. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Joshua and Samuel, David, Isaiah and Daniel, will all be there. What pleasure it will be to sit at the feet of all those, who, through faith and obedience were the friends of God while He worked out the plan, in the ancient days before

they knew of the church yet to be born to complete all His good purposes in the final restitution of all things?

It will be a day disrobed of all sorrow and tears. The centuries of Jewish estrangement from God, and wandering over the face of the earth, without a home or a state, with the hand of every man raised against them, and persecutions from which only miracle has preserved them as a people, will be succeeded by eternal rest. For no power will ever, thenceforth, be able to dislodge them from their land. From its long rest the land will greet them with smiles and abundance. The measure of their happiness will be filled with the rest for which they so long sighed.

The land is to be re-distributed. The Lord will divide it so that a portion will fall to each tribe. Bounded on the west by the Mediterranean Sea, the land will extend clear to the Gulf of Oman; and from the Nile on the south it will reach to the Euphrates river. There will be thirteen equal territories, each fifty miles wide. The "temple space" will be the sixth. It will be fertilized by the waters which issue from the temple rock. The wisdom of God planned the map and every detail of the topography, thousands of years ago,

and Ezekiel delivered the specifications to the people long before the Messiah first came.

Over each tribe will sit an apostle of the Lord. They are to be set as the judges of Israel. Christ, Himself, made the appointments while He led them during the earthly ministry. Their desire to sit with Him in the kingdom will be gratified. Thus organized, Israel will become the literal head of the nations, fulfiling the declaration of Moses before he ascended Nebo to die and be buried by his God. Surpassing wisdom and omnipotent power will accomplish it all.

XVIII.

ISRAEL is to become, not only the royal, but the priestly nation of the world. As the church is the heavenly, or spiritual bride, so is Israel, the earthly, or material consort of the King. From her will earthly rulers proceed, and by her will the temporal ministries of the King be extended to all peoples. Just delivered from the great tribulation, they will be gladly accepted by all men. He, the Blessed, will be the desire of all peoples. Men will see that the divine dealings with them during the ages were, each, a necessary and perfectly fitting part of the completed mosaic of redemption. The election of the Hebrews the sacrifice of Jesus, the calling out of the church, the return of the Lord and the restoration of the Jews to their land, were all essential, not as ends in themselves, but to perfect the only plan by which the earth could be delivered from the curse of sin.

Then the revival of the ages will break out. The Jews, eminently fitted by their love and zeal for their new King, and by their in-

timate knowledge of all peoples among whom they have dwelt, will be the evangelists. The impossible will come to pass. Think of a Jew leading a sinner to the mourner's bench, to find Christ. But he will. And a nation shall be born in a day.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you," (Zech. viii. 23).

The universal acceptance of Christ by all nations will be followed by the establishment of an annual convocation at Jerusalem in which all peoples, kindreds, and tribes will participate. The desire of the people to travel will thus be utilized in this center of universal worship, from which the report of the goodness and glory of the King will be carried to the uttermost parts of the earth. The feast will also become a perpetual influence to promote the power of the centralized government of Immanuel.

"And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year

to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain," (Zech. xiv. 16, 17).

Freed from Satanic influence, worn out by centuries of ineffectual effort to govern themselves well, gladly yielding submission to the Lord's Anointed, and dwelling in obedience, the nations of the earth will settle down to the enjoyment of the Millennial reign of rest and righteousness. The spiritual influence for good, exercised by the enthroned church, will be constant and great. Tongues shall cease and one language will be universally spoken. The seventy-second Psalm is a beautiful description of those days. There are many others:

"For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations," (Isa. lxi. 11).

"For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream; then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides,

and be dandled upon her knees," (Isa. lxvi. 12).

" For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent," (Zeph. iii. 9).

"Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgements are made manifest," (Rev. xv. 4).

The curse will be lifted from "the whole creation which groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." The earth will rejoice and yield her fruit. Every man will dwell in peace under his own vine and fig tree. Rent day will never come. Landlords will be unknown. God's plan for restitution seems to be the reclamation of the deserts and the planting of families, each on its own little tract of ground, where, living close to nature, they can be at peace in their souls, worship God and love their fellow men.

While death will not disappear among the nations until after its destruction at the end of the age, human life will be greatly lengthened. As during the patriarchal age, life will

be numbered by hundreds of years, instead, as now by decades.

With the curse of sin removed, and man at peace, the mountains will skip like lambs, the trees clap their hands, and all God's creatures live together in quietness and content. As in creation, so, in restitution, "the morning stars will sing together and all the sons of God shout for joy."

"And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. And they shall be no more a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid," (Ezek. xxxiv. 25-28).

"The wolf shall also dwell with the Lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall be together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," (Isa. xi. 6-9).

"There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed," (Isa. lxv. 20).

"Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound," (Isa. xxx. 26).

Wars shall cease. Herein is found one of the greatest blessings that will accrue to the bleeding millions of earth. All ages have been cursed by war, our own more than any

other. They must continue until they demonstrate the futility of all human effort to lighten the woes of the world, by force. The greed and ambition of earthly monarchs and governments, are insatiable. All this will be put away by the imprisonment of Satan so that he can "deceive the nations no more."

"But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked," (Isa. xi. 4).

"And I will cut off the chariot from Ephriam, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off; and He shall speak peace unto the heathen; and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth," (Zech. ix. 10).

"And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks; nations shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more," (Micah iv. 3).

"And I saw an angel come down from

heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season," (Rev. xx. 1-3).

What more can we say? Is it not enough? Only when God undertakes will the great work be wrought. Only as we conform our efforts to His plan will we be blessed with success and reward. The gorgeous colors and the lights and shadows of the Millennial picture can be seen and enjoyed only by the study of the picture itself. It is on exhibition in the Book, all of which, without reservation, we recommend to all people. It is the only reliable chart and compass in the hands of men.

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